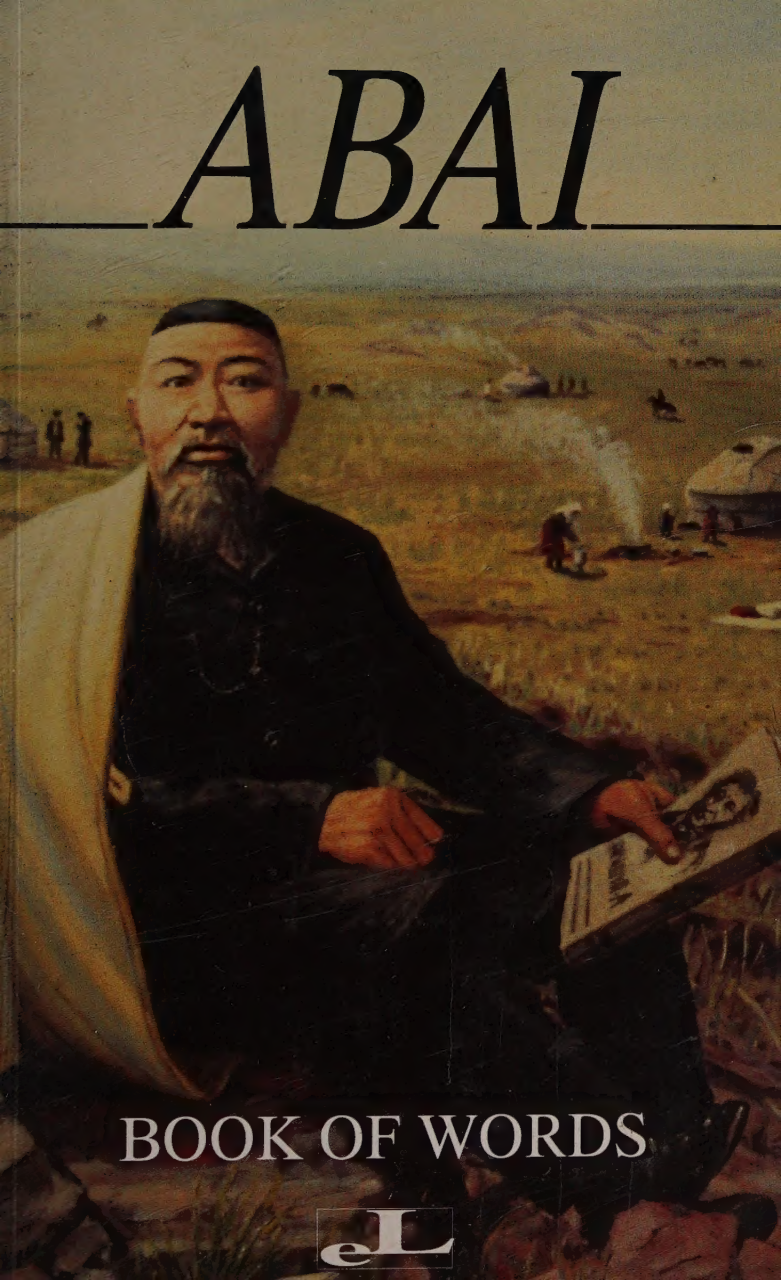
ABAI



BOOK OF WORDS

АБАЙ
ҚАРАСӨЗ

ABAI
BOOK OF WORDS

THE INCURABLE SADNESS OF THE WISE ONE

A Word about Abai

For the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the birth of Abai. This is dedicated to his memory with gratitude and love.

He is beautiful and great
in his eternal yearning for the truth..
Goethe

A

Abai. Thus, fondly and with love the Kazakhs call one of their greatest sons.

Abai was a great poet, musician, translator, philosopher and political activist.

Abai had one of the most tragic natures in all Kazakh poetry.

He was a wise man with an incurable sadness of the soul:

I myself strove to improve my mind,
and knew no equal in eloquence!
But my work is not valued among the people
and I chose the peace of solitude in life.

Abai was the first to enrich Kazakh poetry with ph losophy. He discovered a new poetry, realising the synthe sis of philosophical and artistic principles. With the nam of Abai, a new Kazakh poetry of conscious philosophica and stylistic purpose was born on the steppe.

Like no one else, Abai achieved the renewal of idea in Kazakh society. This could only be achieved by awak ening the old national feelings and resurrecting the genuin folk traditions. Already at the end of the nineteenth centu ry Abai's art rose to the height of poetic realism of th twentieth century.

Poetry must bear the stamp an integral, unestrange personality, saved from alienation. Abai always remaine on the side of the people—for they, in his understandin are the only support of art, the only preserver of spiritual ty in the world.

The poet did not admire from outside the original pi turesqueness of folklore—Abai's art, with a deep an meaningful necessity, penetrates into the essence of th world of imagery of folk poetry, and perceives the rel tionship to life, love, death, as events of the cosmic orde

The poetry of Abai is made more powerful by colou and literary and philosophical associations. When you rea Abai, you are enchanted by the abundant generosity of th

rtist—everything is available to him: the melody of a ong, the precision of impressionistic sketches, elegant tyle, ironic versatility, spell-binding musicality.

The poetry of Abai is melodic and mysterious. The oems of Abai are a powerful torrent of soulfulness, xpressing an unquenchable thirst for redemption and nner spontaneity.

Then suddenly, unexpectedly, a heart-rending voice of onscience and a naked soul impinge upon us—his com- assion for the sorrows and poverty of mankind.

His art is full of pain, and sometimes despair. His lyric oems are a deep-felt experience of the tragedy of the fate f human beings. A person must feel worthy of life and eath, in order that death may redeem him only with new fe.

Abai's poetry brings a great breath of thought and eeling—a breath of the history of the Kazakh people, of ne planetary comprehension of existence. His sad, nchanted songs are imbued with lofty wisdom and the tmost clarity.

Abai communicates the power of his art, he shocks the nagination and ennobles the soul. His artistic world, cre- ted and brought forth by his genius, is huge and great. His rt sprang from life. He was extraordinarily well-read and new thousands of lines by heart. He read books in Arabic, arsi, old Chagatay, and Russian.

Like any great poet, Abai let the world go through him nd created his world within him. He rejected many of the eans of external expressiveness, of high-flown invention,

which he had mastered with such virtuosity.

All his life he eschewed the realities that surrounded him, and extricated himself from the oppressive atmosphere of feudalism and lawlessness.

He wanted to get away from the traditions of the steppe minstrel-bards, which had earlier attracted him, into the world of new images and ideas.

This was a departure from the old aspects of life which stifled the poet, into the world of fresh, noble ideas and active participation. Life as understood by Abai was not a period of sensual enjoyment, but a struggle. Self-sacrifice was inevitable for the sake of immortality in the words of poetry. Only self-sacrifice in poetry allows the word to survive the ages and to carry people forward.

His poetry becomes barer, freeing itself from any conventions; the main aspiration is the movement of ideas. By this the significance of the word is intensified. The main direction of Abai's poems is the affirmation of the unshakeable and unending unity of everything living humankind and the cosmos, the soul and inanimate objects.

Abai, like none other, had a gift for expressing with clarity and precision the formulas that capture the features of spiritual and historical phenomena.

It was only at the beginning of the 1940s that Kazakh thinkers began to appreciate the essence of Abai's poetry and his significance as a world-class poet. This came about as a result of the very great novel by the Kazakh writer Mukhtar Auezov. He was the first to understand that Abai

s a genuine classic of the literature of his time, and that the rue essence of his poetry lies in the fact that in it contained he seeds of the new future, a future that was already beginning to burst through the layers of imperialist persecution.

B

Abai was profoundly interested in philosophy. His erudition in this field was fundamental to this work. The ideas put forward in eastern and western philosophy at the end of the nineteenth century are anticipated, meditated on or argued about in his lyric poems. The same is true of the ideas of the Sufi poets—Omar Khayyam, Rudaki, Rumi and Yassavi, with whom Abai carried on a discussion over many years.

I go down to the bottom, and thirstily drink
the venomous poison of days I lived through.
Again I take as reality
the deceptive noise of the crowd.

Again I begin to believe
the cunning of the eternal deceivers.
I don't run away at breakneck speed.
Is there any poison that I have not drunk?

Philosophical reflections for Abai are the sign of a

defined relationship to the world, a sign of a possible posi
tion of mankind in the world. Ethics were an element of hi
thought and poetry.

In his consciousness all was drawn into a single cen
tre of search for moral integrity, which would help man t
overcome his fear of death and doubts about his under
standing of life. Indeed, for Abai only the human being, hi
moral and spiritual existence, is important and necessary
So in his poems it is not the human being who dissolves i
nature, but nature that finds its place in the inner space o
the human being.

The poetry of the mature Abai enjoins contact, a heart
felt connection with people. He calls on his people to wak
up and keep their souls and bodies vigilant, urging them t
ceaseless moral endeavour.

At the core of eastern poetry lies a special, honoure
relationship to the word, a distinctive cult of the word. Fo
the poet of the East, the genuine word of poetry was also
an act. In this way only could one exert influence on th
people. The significance of the word served on the stepp
as a weapon, a powerful sword.

Abai was able to unite organically the wisdom of th
East and the progressive ideas of the West. The steppe poe
Abai succeeded in fusing the formal poetics of East and
West to create a deeply humanistic synthesis. In the same
way he developed the western-eastern synthesis of Goethe
opposed in equal measure to the colonialising concepts o
'Eurocentrism' and nationalistic dogmas.

In the creative evolution of Pushkin, we find the spe

cial development of the 'eastern theme' in his poetry. It is amazing how deeply Pushkin felt the many, subtle musical nuances of eastern poetry and was able to preserve them and give them their own resonance. The last line of his famous poem 'The Caucasus' was left out because of the censor:

So the laws confine the stormy freedom,
so the wild tribe is in anguish under the power,
so now the silent Caucasus is indignant,
so alien powers oppress it...

The western-eastern synthesis in Pushkin clearly exposes the colonial oppression of the tsarist autocracy. The poet was wholeheartedly on the side of the persecuted, on the side of the freedom-loving people.

At the end of the nineteenth century the colonial oppression of Kazakhia by the Russian autocracy was intensified. The colonial steppe was choking in economic, social and cultural backwardness. The nomadic culture had fallen into decline, leaving a void in its place.

The harmonious world order was forcibly broken. A faceless, crude, monstrous power of destruction came into the steppe as an everyday reality. The steppe was cowed under the oppression of gendarmes, and with it poetry, legends, fables... Death from the sabre and the bullet is against nature. Arbitrary rule does not bring about rebirth. The harmony of a world is destroyed when social cataclysms and expansionism violate it.

In those years the way of every Kazakh poet and thinker was one of tragic loneliness. Abai understood, as a great poet, that he only had one way—the people. He desired to see his people as having lofty spirits.

Never, since as far back as the seventh and eighth centuries, had Kazakh thought worked with such effort and accord. The current of general problems and anxieties runs through the whole of national culture from philosophical abstractions to lyrical outpourings.

The humanistic synthesis of every great poet of the nineteenth century comes out in its unrepeatably individual aspect.

The highest spiritual value of the works of Abai is the concept of the free personality of a fighter against social evil and inhumanity. The same understanding is characteristic of many great creators: Shakespeare, Goethe, Byron, Pushkin, Lermontov, Rabindranath Tagore...

A

Abai's reflections in poetry and prose about the personality, about its finiteness and infiniteness, led him to God.

It's easy to say: 'Here is God!' But the way
to him does not lie through the word.
Be pure in soul and heart—
there is no need for any other truth.

But you cannot reach God with your mind,
in vain my tongue interprets him.
There is no doubt! God is in everything
that exists in the visible world.

The world was not created by God to become a dwelling-place of evil. The world was created for people, for human beings participate in godliness, and part of it and its outcome. The unity and harmony of the world are inconceivable without mankind. Reason is given to humans so that they may understand the world created for them and use that knowledge as a weapon to achieve a higher aim.

For those that are truly wise, there is no abyss separating heaven from earth. Evil, which seems to exist, is born only of ignorance and can be overcome by directing knowledge to the affirmation of good, to the higher aim: union with God and the higher structure and harmony.

Abai considers that human beings are destined to live, create and act, and not to be in the captivity of evil.

In his amazing *Book of Words* the poet expressed his reflections over a period of years, his searchings and discoveries, anxiety and despair, sorrows and joy of revelations, impetuosity of soul and bitter reckonings, anger and humility.

At the beginning of the book, he writes: 'Whether for good or ill, I have lived my life, travelling a long road fraught with struggles and quarrels, disputes and arguments, suffering and anxiety, and reached these advanced years to find myself at the end of my tether, tired of everything. I

have realised the vanity and futility of my labours and the meanness of my existence. What shall I occupy myself with now and how shall I live out the rest of my days? I am puzzled that I can find no answer to this question.'

His *Book of Words* is a deeply meaningful way to truth. The idea that permeates it is both simple and grand. The poet tirelessly reminds us that humans have the greatest value in the world, and that they should be beautiful and harmoniously perfect. Their souls should also be beautiful, as should their mind, body and feelings. Humans are called upon to direct their thoughts and actions only to the good, only to exalted actions.

The striving from a separate personality towards humanity changed incredibly the spiritual climate of the poetry of Abai.

Understanding of the real world and the personal responsibility of everyone in the world—this is what the great poet worked for in his art and life.

Abai relentlessly placed the question of the fate of Kazakhia before his people. When laying stress on higher moral standards, he does not denigrate his own people, but rather calls them to his wisdom. It is precisely because of this that his art arouses and sustains the faith of human beings in their strength, in the triumph of good.

Abai explains that the world is eternal, united and harmonious. Discord, anguish, even death cannot destroy the harmony, for they are natural.

The extremes of anger, despair and hope seize people when they confront the inevitability of death. This burst of

feelings, tension of the whole human being, is a passion without which there is no original inspiration.

Abai was a raging creator.

With this rage the poet contemplated clearly his own and the world's fate. Human life moves within the laws of a beautiful and tragic harmony: love and freedom are found in death, anger does not settle for the small, and the raging soul rushes to the last redistribution.

Like a truly great man, he did not fear slander, open insults and the hatred of fools.

Like a true citizen, he fulfilled his duty to mankind, served it to his last breath, and remained honest in his striving for the truth.

Love is always on the border of death, for love that has not reached that incandescence is not love. One should also remember that freedom is only attained through self-denial.

We search for moral lessons in the poems of Abai, whose life has become a legend.

I

The great poet of the steppe, not understood by his own people, remained alone, face to face with God.

Many are captives of the transitory,
and so they trip and fall.
But can one say 'died' about one
who left behind immortal words?

Abai loved his people as no other, and that's why his words ooze blood as his soul bleeds.

The frail soul of the creator was taut as the bowstring.

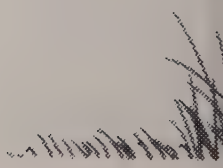
He left this world without any farewells. Those who were worthy of his conversation, love and fellow-suffering were waiting for him on the other side.

All his powers were dedicated to the enlightenment of his people, but the people only appreciated the enchanting melodies of his songs, and did not comprehend the deep essence of his thoughts, did not follow his wise advice.

This was the beginning and the end of the tragedy of Abai.

And the tragedy of his freethinking and irresponsible people was born and grew stronger.

Rollan Seisenbaev



POETRY

1.

The ticking of clocks is not an idle sound:
life flows by, my friend, their beating repeats.
A minute is like an age for a man:
it goes, it dies, and the circle of life is closed.

A clock is a ticking thief,
stealing life daily, taking it unnoticed,
so that without love and constancy
life is nonetheless just fleeting deception.

In a clock's rustling is past life,
if it dulls a soul or comforts it,
still reason knows that time is treacherous,
it goes past as though its tick is harmless.

A day, a month, a year go off into ashes,
old age comes, time flows away...
Since transient time beckoned us pitilessly,
oh, imperishable Creator, have mercy upon us!

2.

Nature can die, but humans are immortal,
but they can't return, nor joke and laugh again.
The ignoramuses called death
the parting between 'I' and 'mine'.

Many are captives of the transitory,
and so they trip and fall.
But can one say 'died' about one
who left behind immortal words?

Who in this life is not susceptible to temptation?
Eternity is sensitive to the flaws of the mortal.
You won't be able to identify in what the flaw lies,
if you don't tirelessly follow deep thought.

Who is a friend to the worldly cannot be a friend to the after-life.
You cannot combine the two equally in one.
I cannot turn my tongue to call those just who have
a weakness for the worldly and are weak-willed before eternity.

3.

Oh, Kazakhs, my poor people,
you let your moustaches grow.
Since you don't distinguish good from evil,
now you have blood on one cheek and grease on the other.
Eye to eye, you're welcoming and kind, but then
you're mercenary-minded and your face changes.
You don't pay attention to others and go on about your own stuff,
and you rattle your tongue with idle talk.
You cannot display power over your own good;
your night sleep is broken, you've forgotten daytime laughter.
Envy gnaws at those who are not strong,
tomorrow is different from today.
Any old rabble try to control you.
They have disfigured the face of the people.
I have serious doubts about your being corrected
if your will has gone from you.
Those close to you take offence at the slightest trifle,
and God has taken away their sound judgement.
There is no unity, no agreement, no truth in the soul,
and so your herds disappear like snow.
Measuring your power of intelligence and good,
rivalry has shed your powers.
If your flaw cannot be lived out and remains within you,
you will display your baseness always and in everything.

Where can one find comfort, what can one trust in,
if even forty of you cannot pull the carriage over the hill?
Without a strong spirit, without faithfulness, with
insignificant inconstancy,
what use to you is empty fun?
When it comes for the turn of someone who can
admonish,
they too cannot get by without secret whisperings.

4.

When I was young I didn't give much thought to
knowledge,
I saw the use, but didn't test it out.
When I grew up, I didn't know how to latch onto it.
I stretched out my hand to it very late.
Who should I blame that I was left with nothing?
If I'd striven in time would I be like this now?
Children are one of the joys of life.
I'm not against teaching children.
I put my son in the madrasah, so that he could acquire
knowledge
and not so that he could gain favour and status.
I myself strove to better myself.
In the field of rhetoric I was second to none among the
Kazakhs.
But no one can value your works,
and so I preferred in everything the peace of solitude.

5.

The one who strays is certain that ahead is the right
road and the path is behind him.
For him, what insincere people say is also right.
They are self-satisfied as though they are drowning in
riches,
and they don't fear at all unjust deeds.
His short cloak suits him.
He does his belt below the waist and walks carefree.
He tries to cock his white fur hat
at a more rakish angle, and it's finally worn out.
In summer he never goes without his white cap,
and his stick is white in his hands.
He puts his stick on the wall of the yurt and hangs his
cap on it.
He looks at them secretly, admiring them from afar.
His tight trousers emphasise his cunning.
He pulls at them all the time when they puff at the knees.
Like a prisoner whose time is limited,
he only takes them off at night.
As though he is equal to all from childhood,
he jokes, scratches himself and laughs.
He changes the expression on his face one hundred times
before speaking;
he throws back his head, waggles his eyebrows and
swaggers.
Such rogues are numberless among the people,
and all of them are not suited to work.

They don't cherish the soul, but are polished on the
outside.
Tight trousers and short cloaks—that's all they know.
It doesn't come to their mind to pasture the flocks,
to work honestly, get rich and be useful to the people.
They roam round the auls driving their only horse till it
sweats,
not bothering to give the correct greeting,
nodding from afar with a vacant, blissful smile.

6.

The beys live in worry, protecting their wealth.
They buy, knocking off ten percent.
Those whom heavenly retribution has hit,
having accepted the ten, hanker after the ninety per cent.
He rode into town, having drunk the water of the Irtysh
on the way.
He left a badly written denunciation.
He grew heated, as though he had subjugated at once
the Volga and the Irtysh.
As he returned, he swelled with importance.
His horse was exhausted with the way there and back.
He himself was up to the eyes in unpaid debts.
God had doomed him to find happiness
in the fame of the rogue, the cunning expert.
If the bey defends himself, they persistently accuse him
of miserliness,
and he picks a timely messenger to go to the town.
The strong overcome, the rich win—that's a well-known
truth.
He who has finally failed falls into the net.
Everyone will bring up an evilly growling dog so that in
time
they will set it upon the one who's soul is radiant.

7.

My soul is dead but on the outside I'm well.
I repeat to everyone I meet—
friend today, enemy tomorrow.
Oh my God, what can I do?
Arguments in your home
thunder like a waterfall.
In front of strangers you're timid and quiet,
confused, submissive, inert.
Is that what you were like last time?
How's this for a knight?
Three days only you've been free
and you're already unusually restive.
When need presses down,
you are loving, you will melt any heart.
But why are you so inaccessible and sullen,
when your soul again acquires peace?
You decided, without a backward look,
on robbery and cunning.
If you give, you give five,
if you take, you take six.
Under serious tests,
where the arguments are waged in a hundred ways,
those like you, as a result,
fall into bloody discord.
Don't slam the door
through which you have to return.
Whether you bloom or fall into disaster,

day will come when you need it.

26.

brought him up from a puppy to a dog—
e bit me on the leg.
taught someone how to shoot—
nd he cunningly shot me down.

8.

Save me—how can I preserve
my heart from evil people—
their wicked, snake-in-the-grass talk
tears it into forty pieces.

Those I loved are no longer.
My friend has turned into my enemy—
light darkens with evil.
I cannot find support from anyone.

Old age is breathing in my face.
The time of hopes is past.
Self-love comforts the fools,
and ignoramuses pester me.

Who mourns the filth of the earth
will understand my worries,
and will keep the soul pure,
and the imperishable light will save it.

9.

I don't write poems for amusement,
and not to gather together tales and fables.
I write to give an example to the young,
whose hearts are sensitive and tongues flexible.
These words are available not to the thick-skulled, but
to the seekers
who have a reasonable heart and a clear mind.

Come directly, no straying, no looking for devious ways.
You cannot recognise the essence from outside.
In the beginning my words seem strange,
since you've grown up not hearing such words.
I am amazed at people who can't comprehend what's
been said.
They demand new words after new words.

I have told my tale without the fabled Hasret Ali and the
dragon,
and there is no beauty with a gold chin.
I don't revile old age, calling death down on it,
and I don't call the *dzhigits* to dishonour.
Do not turn away, considering my words not colourful
enough.
Convince yourselves somehow that the most valuable
word is the deepest.

The noisy rustlers are born from knights.
They are bustling people, given over to women and
empty fun,
without honour, reason or jobs,
well known as stormy drunkards.
If I arouse laughter from a pitiful group of madmen,
then, my tongue, don't make the effort, be silent.

My brother who has the gift of poetry and fine speech,
I curse—don't waste good words on us.
There's no use in them for us, for you.
Priceless words sink in the emptiness.
Dandy, phrase-monger, womaniser, proud one,
what joy can they bring to you?

10.

GIRL'S SONG

You praise so splendidly—
you've thought of everything.
I no longer am in control of myself,
you yourself know where to take me.

We notice others too,
and we avoid those who throw themselves headlong at us.
But if we meet one as noble as you,
how can we refuse with a shake of the head?

Your words are of the same order as your mind.
You are a hot coal, and I am like butter.
Your hot words have penetrated through me,
how can the butter not melt?

I will be calm if you are kind to me,
but if you abandon me—oh my God!
You'll never find a creature in this world
with a more bitter fate than your wretched one.

If you don't fulfil my desires,
what can be done—you'll bury me in the ground.
Don't attract me to you
if you have not true love in your heart.

Then sadness about you will turn to grief,
my soul will be brought crashing down to earth.
Another's bed without you
will become my grave.

You are a bold, proud man,
worlds bow before you.
There are numberless wretches like I,
who await your favours by the threshold.

If your soul is favourably disposed to me
and you truly incline towards us,
then I am your turtle-dove and you are a hawk.
Take, enjoy your prey.

Winding like a silken thread,
bending like a flower stem,
I am crushed under your weight
and fulfil passion to the end.

I wrote these words after much consideration.
I thought through all my thoughts.
If they move you,
take them, young people, and read them.

If someone will read and recognise the words,
if a flame flares in the heart,
if a soul is encountered by whom these words are readily
understood,
let them sing them as songs.

He who gathers poems jealously,
who has forgotten melodious songs,
poor KokBey, how you've blundered,
missing out on these poems.

11.

The tresses stream heavily down her back.
The clink of coins round her neck can be heard as she walks quietly.
White-necked one, black eyebrowed, wearing a velvet cap.
Where in the world is such beauty?

The mirror whirlpool of her eyes reflects the world,
her every glance burns the heart.
Her teeth are pearls, the white silk of her tender body...
Who has found such a beauty?

Her supple, harmonious figure, her miniature feet.
This girl is like a dream.
Who will dare to stretch out and pluck
this ripe, sweet, forbidden fruit?

If a brave man will touch her wrist,
he will finally hear his heart scream.
He who leans his head on her white neck
will burn to his bones in love's flames!

2.

Ve've lived a lot of life,
here's only one thing left—to go down into the grave.
Iy tongue has not lost its suppleness
nd a good summer reigns in my words.
od granted me
low-witted listeners.
laving lived till my declining years,
rawing on to death itself,
have never met a person
ho would listen to my words.
laving reached the zenith of life,
ghting with ignorant people
have now reached the border.
ow walk, don't stumble,
on't hide where you can't hide.
eave your former speed behind!
Vhatever grief takes you over,
should not chase you into a blind alley.
rise, my soul, arise!
ike a fledgling, gathering strength,
retches its wings,
on't hide anymore in the nest.
oar, my soul, soar!
here's anguish in the soul, inescapable grief,
ut I have something to say:
t those who understand listen,
y, my words, fly!

Sadness and anguish burn in the soul.
Fire constricts the chest.
I hasten to pour out everything.
You are alone—the darkness of ignorance.
What can you explain
to this foolish profane?
But their nature is not peaceful, an itch gnaws at them.
They understand only lies.
No evil scares them,
they are gripped by raging passions.
Not able to leave the home land,
not able to get rid of trouble-makers,
we sit without a twinge of conscience,
not finding any other refuge.
God decreed me to be unhappy from birth,
he condemned me to a futile battle with a dishonest people.
He locked me up in bitter isolation,
and that's how I learned to be humble to my fate.

13.

What are you pining about, my soul?
Come now, don't be alarmed for nothing.
You thrash around, fighting all the time,
don't run away, let's talk openly.

He has honour and glory
whom the crowd raise up.
What is the good of glorification
if the people does not recognise it?

Praise is an empty word, an enemy of the people
thought up by flatterers.
Be happy if you meet a person
who, having praised you, does not abuse you.

Whoever the profane praise,
don't you be profane among them.
Struck by God's anger, the crowd
engage in idle talk for nothing.

Everyone speculates with words,
but what about trading them?
Two words from a devil
and they are turned in a wheel.

Don't take a sold word—
it cannot achieve pricelessness.
Money is the husband for the whore.
She does not value a true husband.

I am not a slave of the words of praise,
violence does not hold sway over reason.
He who is damned by God is not worth a penny,
and there is no shame while there is death.

Life with its riches
is like torrents of water.
Joys and misfortunes in the past,
if one thinks about it, are poison.

14.

My heart is in forty shreds
from the malicious intent of the world.
How can it stay unharmed
among this bigotry?

Of those whom the heart loved,
one has died, another's become an enemy.
Some sow evil, others discord.
There's no one to rely on.

Old age has become close
and there are no hopes ahead.
The obstinate are those who know no grief,
but they do us no good.

Oh, you, whose heart is bloody from mourning,
turn to me.
Think of the unquenched greatness
of the indefatigable soul.

15.

Look how he lies to you, he's perfidious and cunning,
ready for everything to save himself, restoring his soul.
Friendship, enmity are all the same to him.
Vanity of vanities alone troubles his shallow nature.

He's known heartache and surfeit and rapture,
but he's wrenched black jealousy from himself!
Now honour and conscience serve his carnal delights.
He lives in the present, not grieving in the least for the future.

Nearest and dearest are now two-faced,
enemies are stronger than friends, vengeance triumphs all around,
treachery in deeds, perfidiousness in love...
What times these are! How can we endure them?

Although you're of an age, you're not mature yet:
you enjoy playing pranks like a kid.
The father scolds his son like a friend would,
but is it fitting for the son to abuse the father?

16.

I'm disillusioned with enemies and friends alike,
who'll deceive me next?
I recognised this in kith and kin and strangers,
with few exceptions.

Everyone is friendly so as to get gain from you—
they'll betray you as soon as your fame wanes.
And if you're doomed to stand on the battlefield,
they'll say: 'My life is more valuable than his!'

Terror, brigandage and robbery are the talk of the country.
I never found a reasonable person who could take advice.
Now nothing is left here
which would delight the soul.

The rich man is not happy with his riches.
They let the horses out to pasture in summer, in autumn
they can't find them to saddle.
Rustlers chase whole herds away leaving no tracks—
they are evil spirits, who cannot even smile at their luck!

The merchant cannot trade in peace,
he's realised: the debtor will never pay him back!
The debtor without shame publicly denies his words,
the merchant is tormented by the shameless people.

The intelligent man is humiliated.
Only the ignoramus is happy that the world has fallen so low.
Like speckled snakes or croaking hungry toads,
they hiss at the old, and shame has disappeared completely!

It's even more difficult for the influential to maintain authority,
they cannot get rid of the bandit robberies.
Mischief circles like thieves at large,
the authorities can't even question it.

Close relatives are ready to chase each other into the grave—
they don't hear each others' words.
Step-brothers and brothers, children, sisters, wives,
don't live a single good day in peace.

The strong strain to overcome the obstinate,
ready in their passion to burn in the flames.
In a bad, drunken bout,
they cannot distinguish beforehand harm from good.

They are reluctant to chase the herds to the upland pastures,
and there's always scandal in the autumn pastures.
The winter for the herd is a bitter fate.
They don't argue the facts so as not to court disaster.

The young men have forgotten all shame before the old.
The money-grubber can't get over his avarice.
He flatters you with his welcome,
but behind your back he slanders and abuses you.

17.

Poetry is the queen of language, the sovereign of the
word.
It takes a wise man to extract it from the strongholds.
Language has free will in it and it warms the heart
with the roundness and perfection of its form.

If an alien word has crept into the poem,
then the poet is most despised, most talentless.
Performers and listeners alike are more and more
ignorant.
There are none among them who recognise the word's
weight.

Ayat and Khadis are the fathers of the word.
Their famous poems sang.
Do not endow the word with powerful strength
unless Allah and the Prophet profit by it.

The learned men preaching in the mosque,
the sad songs of the holy,
each of them compose poems harmoniously
in measure of their gifts and powers.

Many test themselves in composing poems,
but there are chosen ones among them.
Some of the best Kazakhs are fated
to compose poems with gold hearts, arrayed in silver.

I see this when I look back on the past:
the speech of the powerful is peppered with proverbs.
Stupid, ignorant poets
shower them with their poems that are woven from
various trifles.

They picked up the kobyz and the dombra
and sang songs of praise to the unworthy.
They wandered, asking for mercy with their songs,
debasing the word in foreign parts.

They troubled the language for profit, and filled up the
soul,
pleading for crumbs sometimes with deception, some
times with flattery.
Begging in a distant, foreign land,
the cursed ones glorified the riches of their homeland.

They found everywhere the vain rich,
but didn't get rich, however much they took.
The poems seemed to be futile babbling
to those who saw and heard them.

18.

I will not talk in proverbs as the powerful did in olden times.
I will not bawl out songs for good money, like an old minstrel.
The words were born again, listener, renew yourself.
I am coming over to you deliberately.

If I entertained you with tales of knights and warriors,
or of a beauty, or all sorts of rubbish,
you would listen to my idle talk,
rewarding me a thousandfold for every word.

The people are indifferent and get stuck on good consciences,
and say that they obey the will of fate.
There are many scoundrels, impostors and ignorant people.
Don't condemn yourself if you get carried away as you curse them.

Contrive to connect the pine with the vine.
Everyone thinks up means to grab.
What can the hunter of glory and riches understand?
One will be found by looking through a thousand.

Acquiring goods with cunning and robbery,
he is happy if he's called a sly person.
He scares the powerful with imaginary enemies,
hoping to find gain from their confusion.

Conscience, honour, tolerance, talent:
no one will make a choice from these.
They don't seek deep thought or true knowledge.
They pluck like wool gossip and lies.

19.

There are no true friends among people.
Where can you find the unshakeability of a promise?
What once existed, now is no longer.
Mockery, slander, subterfuge.

Good deeds are soon forgotten.
You tolerate a blunder and a grievance arises.
Refuse their services.
If only they didn't cause harm.

Gain and praise
only serve themselves.
If there is gain from gossip,
then let there be gossip everywhere.

I have only got back grief
from those I did good to.
O God, you have ruined my life,
I never even met a woman to love.

The enemies mock and bully.
Treachery wears down the friends.
Some play tricks, but who is guilty?
Life passes before you can understand it.

Who cannot identify by sight a good person,
worthy of true friendship?
Who will value closeness
with a self-satisfied, treacherous cheat?

20.

Sadness is born from learning,
malice is born from knowledge.
When sadness and malice take you in a vice
a cry bursts from the tongue.
How can I find joy
in my unformed life?
I look back and see that I cannot
gallop away on a horse from my vices.

Everywhere you meet
saddened, decrepit old men like me.
If you are not brazen and stupid
you won't find gain in this world.

Riches do not add on mind.
Beauty does not add on prosperity.
Even in the cradle the child
has acquired an insatiable cunning.
Should one value the honours for someone
who is a friend on the outside but an enemy in the soul?
The fresh wind, which you waited for
does not blow in the expanses
and in the storeroom, however it rages
you can't grasp its charm.

If we lived in mutual respect,
we'd be admired by all and happy.
But people cannot enjoy for long
happiness and peace.
It only takes one person to bawl out a song
and everyone crowds around,
shoving and kicking,
and you can't chase them off with a stick.
They look askance and behave affectedly
to the one who shows the true road.
Can you stop them like you catch a horse with a noose
on a stick?

If you're curious about the essence of people,
listen and I'll tell you.
Someone boasts, imagining
that he's the almighty creator of the earth.
Another, a lawyer, let's it be understood that he is able
to drag you off as a result of one denunciation.
A third shakes the hand of holy people,
outside he's sanctimonious but inside he's a wicked
person.

Some of them make the hadj,
although the hadj is not compulsory for their sort.
Why was he zealous for this,
when he's given back the gift of being a Moslem?

Grey-haired, indignant old man,
run from the crowd, hurry home.
If suddenly rivalry breaks out among the relatives,
and they divide up into sides,
you will have to take the choice sheep's head
in exchange for a blessing.
You can't find words of reconciliation,
you'll just say 'Don't regret the good'!
Don't beg for bitches' honours.
Sit at home if hungry death menaces you.
If you think about it seriously,
where are there not such old men?
Only harm comes from the elders who sow discord,
and aimlessly stray round the world.

21.

Who stuffs his pockets tight
will prepare for his friend a wicked deception.
Who always bows to gain
is alien to people's poverty and troubles.

A slave to riches, a boasting empty vessel,
he stabs the people in the eyes and reaps their envy.
Pig of pigs, hoping to force them to love him
he gives left-overs instead of bones to those close like
to dogs.

Nowadays who has heard praises to the mind?
For whom are honour and conscience characteristics?
Everyone has an eye to get rich quick:
and in their lust for gold they'll even eat shit!

Do you dare to read these bitter words?
Sell your work. But conscience is not for sale!
Human beings have only three virtues:
the burning heart, the bright mind—and firm will.

22.

Don't believe the flatterers when they sing your praises,
people are perfidious—they lie for nothing!
Only your work and intelligence
protect you from a false opinion of yourself.

Don't test yourself by being too trustworthy.
Don't get entangled going after fame.
It's not worthy of you, in the heat of deception,
to chase after a mirage.

If grief comes, resist, don't give up!
If joy comes, don't be overjoyful.
You must simply look deeper into the heart—
you will find there the true treasure—don't lose it.

23.

Throwing your fiery feelings
now to the cold, now to the heat,
both they, and passion that eclipses the clear day,
will fade one day, you know.

At the very beginning,
when the feelings are clear,
you will make your own sense
of the series of fleeting days.

On trouble-free days
you carry on the conversation openly,
but suddenly, embarrassment, shame—
the conversation is broken off.

Your revelations
seem to be empty words,
and it would be too much effort
to disclose them to someone.

If even rejecting them is too much,
then the darkness of the soul cannot be overcome.
The advice of one who knows
will not lessen your darkness.

24.

The word Allah is easy to pronounce,
but the way to Allah lies not through the tongue.
The striving of the heart, the honesty of the soul:
nothing is too awkward for the truth.

The efforts of the body are concentrated
on the acquisition of knowledge;
reason and knowledge of the heart
are the manifestation of love to the creator.

You cannot reach Allah by reason.
Oh, I haven't got the language to talk intelligently about
Him!
There is no doubt as to His existence:
all that exists is witness to that.

The heart does not know, but it feels.
It has Reason and Essence.
And the wise preachers in vain
run their fingers over words.

25.

Man is a sack, full of shit.
When you die, you'll smell worse than shit.
You are proud because you think you are above me—
that's a sure sign of your darkness.
Yesterday you were a child, now you are in your
declining years.
You are convinced that you cannot remain in
one position.
Love human beings, feel the mystery of Allah.
What could be more fascinating in this life!

26.

Life has passed, full of regrets.
I have lived it, not discovering its fullness.
I considered myself as one of many thinkers
and I lived without thought or worries, expecting empty boasting.

I myself lagged behind in teaching the unintelligent.
Many ignoramuses tried to equate me with them.
Idleness became a common phenomenon.
Vulgar jokes, empty fun.

We call him Russian who throws truth in your face.
He does not turn away squeamishly from vain hypocrisy.
If we don't rid ourselves of unreliability and come to some mutual understanding
earlier or later we'll lose our humane features.

The treacherous idler destroys the common peace.
Sincerity cannot be found even in a friend.
They don't forgive the heart the smallest thing,
hiding bitter reproach in their heart.

True love and friendship don't recognise alienation.
The unity of hearts has no shame.
Our confessions of love and friendship
are a burden on the heart, created out of falsity.

have no friends, nor love, whom I trust.
have put my disillusion into poems.
he unknown world seemed to be the smooth of a lake,
ntil the soul became stained.

riendship given by God is a source of warmth,
usting conversations cleanse the soul.
I would create an expert friendship
ne of the fools would scratch my hand, like a dog rose
with its thorns.

he soul tirelessly thirsts for a friendship,
e blood appeals for it and seethes in expectation.
ut I have never met anyone who can stand up to an
enemy,
nd I never found a friend more faithful than
peaceableness.

27.

When I die, will not the damp earth become my resting
place?
My sharp tongue will become silent with shame, like a
girl's.
My poor heart, where love and anger fought,
will it not, poor thing, be turned into an ice block?

One day the inevitable stroke of fate will strike:
to some it comes early, to some it comes late.
My hasty heart, which has stumbled more than once,
will you not become an object of judgement of the
future generations?

Then I, the unfortunate one, will be able to answer
nothing.
You will be free in your judgements.
Is it just for one person to burn twice?
My blood is dark, my soul is defeated.

Look deep into your heart.
I am a man with a mysterious soul, remember this.
I grew up in places off the beaten track.
I fought single-handed against thousands, don't judge me

n my youth I was carefree, never a thought.
My nimble thoughts and anger lit the lamp.
I awoke early, began to think, but did not achieve anything.
They often tugged at the hem of my coat.

When I came to understand things, I no longer was master of my fate.
I wandered around a lot, don't be harsh with me.
People did not follow after me, they deprived me of free-will, putting me down.
Be merciful, let your sleep be restful, and listen to me.

Within me are poison and flames, I'm only happy on the outside.
I will go into non-existence, not having achieved anything.
My songs are gossips, chattering round the world.
It's better for me to be silent, and not give away my secrets.

28.

I spoke many words before too,
in sadness I spoke them, thinking of the future,
hoping that the intelligent ones would be ashamed
and think again and try to turn over a new leaf.

Our people talk too much, they're not a good example.
One word hastens after another—there's no
understanding them.
With tears from eyes, with blood from heart—
it's impossible to thaw the ice of their souls.

O, my people, don't be so arrogant, listen.
Don't think about the external form of words,
concentrate on their sense—what does it cost you to
listen a little?
These words are not written for idle talk.

Don't get lost off the road.
Get onto and stick to the beaten track.
No knowledge, no work.
You've even forgotten how to pasture the herds.

9.

on't pick up the dombra,
on't pluck the spell-binding strings.
e still, heart, don't beat so heavily,
ars are ready to well from the eyes.

Iy soul is silent and depressed
; it resurrects the past.
eartache plays with my brain,
epriving me of all will-power.

ut you, my love, look at me,
ıticing with sweetest tenderness,
ıd fan that anguish that gnaws at me
ith the warm light of your soul.

xtinguish the fire in my soul,
ash my wounds with a wave of tenderness.
Iy soul is on the wane,
eak caressingly, sweetly.

omfort with the touch of your warm hands,
ing peace to my broken soul.
Iy mind is ready to follow beyond the thought
whatever depth, just say the word.

I was a contender,
but now my soul is mortally tired.
Don't torment it, my dear,
find the magic balm—and heal it.!

0.

ntruding on the ear, the wonderful song
nd the sweet melody captured the soul.
arious thoughts wafted.
f you love the song, love it like I do.

verything is born from thought.
forget irretrievably.
he soul is penetrated by the song
nd the heart warms the body.

he thirsty man, having found water in the desert,
lings greedily to the spring.
icks and jabs are powerless here
nd he cannot be stopped with threats.

le who forces love and trembling
ises the veil of the past.
obing in the clothes of life
rings to life the person who's long been gone.

's as though a whisper I had forgotten
out comes to the ear.
he soul fills with thoughts of long ago,
surrecting the cursed past.

I go down to the bottom, and thirstily drink
the venomous poison of days I lived through.
Again I take as reality
the deceptive noise of the crowd.

Again I begin to believe
the cunning of the eternal deceivers.
I don't run away at breakneck speed.
Is there any poison that I have not drunk?

31.

If the heart does not dream of freedom,
who can awaken the sleeping thoughts?
If the mind is a captive of darkness,
you'll live a dog's life.

If reason is weaker than will
you cannot look into the depths of superficial people.
The exhausted mind of an old man
gets dull under the oppression of habits.

Not having slaked the thirst of the flesh
the soul will not stand it, and pity it.
The body will not take no for an answer
and will demand and hope unceasingly.

Animals have a body and soul too.
Without mind and feelings
what joy is there in life,
without yearning for the depths?

If I can be called a human being,
can I be a fool?
If the people are unintelligent
where is my worth? Just where?

32.

You grew up striving for the azure skies.
Your soul was proud, willful, carefree and daring,
like the green carpet of the ripe harvest,
generously covering the face of the earth.

But harsh time set limits to everything:
the sickle is ready—the harvest has ripened.
You know extreme heat and cold, but still
your soul is not broken—you could withstand.

Your soul is sick from heavy suffering
and on your face is the stamp of former troubles.
Your head drooped like a ripe ear of wheat,
you bent to the ground, bowed by mature thoughts.

Humans are not eternal, but they live
as though there were no death, and do not wish to die.
But, look, the soul has parted with mortal flesh,
ponder where life remains, and where you'll be.

Now you are a hero, but tomorrow only ashes.
Today beckons, all sparkling.
But do you know what tale tomorrow will tell?
Think, my world, of the fact that you were born to die.

33.

You are the pupil of my eyes,
the reason of my heart.
The wounds of love
are incurable in my soul.

Will one of the wise,
respected agas say
that there is any creature
close to or like you?

I will sing, and weep tears,
not sparing my poor eyes.
When it comes to talking
I have ready words for my love.

I shall speak from the heart
and observe decency.
Surely she'll understand?
Why should I wear her out with long conversations?

You look deep
but your look does not consume.
You have a carefree air,
but you test hard.

Though many are sad
you are calm and cold.
I burn and flare,
you don't have mercy on me.

Your forehead stands out and your hair is luxurious,
now down your back, now on your shoulders.
Your neck is white, your cheeks crimson.
My priceless one, show your face.

Your eyes are black, your brows arch.
One look is never enough.
Your lips are a crimson honey-laden flower.
Irreproachable is the whiteness of your teeth.

Your slender profile, your tender figure
bends when the breeze blows.
Your tender, white body
is an unknown flower.
New poem?

My dearest, come closer
and give us your attention.
My eyes, for once be sated,
looking at the form of my darling.

Your sadness is like winter, your smile—spring.
I'm happy when I see you.
You laughter is the singing of a nightingale
which torments my very essence.

Don't be arrogant and unapproachable,
and don't bewitch me.
To sacrifice for you not my peace of mind
but my life, would be too small a thing.

Your aroma is the scent of a flower.
You are the clear ray of sun.
When I see you
my bones melt.

She herself eclipses
irreproachable form and good fame.
Language is powerless to express
her praises which are above all conditions.

You are joy for the soul,
you are nectar for the body.
The Prophet has bequeathed
such love of a beauty like you.

How can I express the rapture?
Torment wears me down in my love.
A meeting is saving balm
for my flaming heart.

There are many in love like I.
Which of them has a place in your heart?
My heart trembled:
I did not know how to say everything.

Who can hold out against her charms?
She walks and her slender figure bends.
A white-toothed smile,
and passion burns stronger.

Husbands too should beware:
everyone is attracted to her.
O God, will the day come
when the poor heart will discover peace?

34.

I proudly scorned ignoramuses
and arrogantly called them fools,
and strove to change my age,
considering myself to have a giant's brain.

But I didn't find support
in the struggle with the dark host of fools.
Set in their ways
they didn't hear my exhortations.

There's terror in how they look,
they are seized with madness.
Not one of them stood their ground.
They stubbornly moved back.

They agreed willingly and easy with all
in their self-satisfied conceit.
Powers waned, days are already numbered.
God have mercy on those who lie in the dust...

I am emaciated, worn out.
Wives and children are the only guests,
and I've known everything about you for a long time.
The people's just the same as ever.

I am not in poverty but in deep trouble.
Think seriously about this.
It's shameful to admit to other people
that this is my people.

Rustling and cliques,
the passions of intoxicated frenzy.
Don't rage, treacherous ones.
But how can the drunkards understand?

A peaceful life and rest
is unworthy everyday boredom.
Robbery and every sort of cunning
attracts and inspires.

Hold yourself further away from this people.
I am exhausted, you know this too.
The old man unceasingly went on and on:
they didn't listen—what's to be done?

5.

WINTER

n white clothes, powerful, grey-bearded,
ıe walks on regardless like a dumb, blind man.
His face is stern, covered in snow-dust,
ınd he walks on, with creaking steps, he'll come in by
and by.
Each breath is shrouded in a frosty cloud.
He came like a long lost relative and caused a
commotion.
He had forced on a nomadic cloud for a hat.
He had a ruddy face and was glowing with health.
His brows were like black clouds and his eyes were
menacing beneath them.
If he shook his head the snow fell off him.
He broke out in anger like the frosty snowstorm
ınd the six-walled tents trembled.
Only rare young mischief-makers would risk running
out to make fun,
ınd they went back quickly, faces burnt with frost, and
chilled to the bone.
Even the shepherd, though he'd struggled into two
sheepskin coats
hid his face in his collar from the blizzard and went
back.
The herd of horses wandered in the steppe under the
snowstorm

and their hooves broke through the snow and ice with difficulty.
Was it the winter snowstorm howling or a wolf?
Shepherds, chase the herds to new pastures, look ahead keenly.
You won't die from lack of sleep, be strong, break the snow crust.
God grant that you get to new pastures.
It's better to give the horses to the poor than to a wolf.
See off empty-handed this harmful, evil old man!

36.

AUTUMN

A flock of heavy grey clouds enveloped the sky.
Autumn: a damp mist covered the earth.
The horses play and their young are frisky
from being well-fed or from the cold.

The grass withered, no flowers as before.
The children's hubbub was silent, the girls' laughter died.
The trees and bushes were without their leaves,
like old men, the worst victims of poverty.

The sheep skins are being tanned in the tubs by someone
whose clothes are motley from rags and patches.
The young wives patch the tattered tents,
urging on the decrepit old women sitting at spinning
wheels.

The geese have returned, and the cranes.
Below a caravan lingers on its way.
The normally noisy auls are quiet.
There's no carefree laughter in the steppe among the
gloomy valleys.

The old men are frozen, the children too.
The autumn cold bites harder and more cruelly in the sad auls.
The dogs can't wait for the scraps and bones,
they go after mice, and you can hear their barking and fighting.

Pastures are bare, grass downtrodden.
The wind sweeps up the dust from the arid pastures.
Indoors it's unheated and unwelcoming.
Curse this life spent in terror from soot and smoke.

37.

SPRING

Spring came and melted the snow and ice.
The earth was covered in soft velvet.
Freed from winter's hibernation and heartache
all that lives clings with its heart to warmth and light.

The birds fly in and spring entered the blossoming
garden,
and the youths made a racket like fledglings.
The old men rose again as from the grave
and are honestly happy to meet again their friends.

The families hurry to their kinsmen in the nearby aul:
embraces, exclamations—a happy commotion.
Young laughter is carried on the air in triumph.
The people have shaken off the winter worries.

Sharp cries come from the she-camels and the lambs
bleat in the yard.
Butterflies and birds flutter in the ravines.
Powerful streams burble, wind and flow
under the fixed gaze of trees and flowers.

Swans and geese glide decorously past the banks.
The children rush about searching for birds' nests.
You gallop on your winged horse.

The hawk soars up, its plumage flashing,
you strap the prey to your saddle—
and the girls playfully block your way.

The young girls' costumes are wonderful.
The snowdrops flower and delight the soul.
The sparrows in the sky and the nightingales in the ravines sing their songs
The cuckoo and thrush echo them from the mountains.

The trading folk come with new goods.
The peasants get down to reaping.
Everyone is rewarded for their long work and sweat.
The flocks multiply with the new young.

What a wonderful world the Creator has given us!
He magnanimously and generously gave us his light.
When mother-earth fed us from her breast,
our Father in heaven thoughtfully inclined over us.

Your soul trusts in the mercy of Allah,
who has breathed life with spring into the earth.
The cattle have grown fat in the steppe, abundance descends,
and man's spirits soar, he comes to from the time of losses.

Everything, except for the black rocks, is warm and
pulses with life.
Everyone is so generous that the skinflints are angry.
You follow the rebirth of the world with rapture—
the soul finds its stronghold in the Creator.

Old women and men go out in the sun, the children are
uproarious.
The herds bask in the sun, glossy and well-fed.
The trill and chirruping of songbirds flows.
The calls of the geese and swans come from the river.

The sunset has faded. The moon and stars triumph.
How could the beams of the stars not pierce the darkness.
But in anticipation of the return of the sun
they pale and lose their sparkle.

The sun now, like a bridegroom back from its travels,
arranges its bond with the bride-earth.
The stars and moon turn pale as they see
how light-bearing and immortal is this bond.

The warm wind brings the news to the moon and stars
that the wedding is nigh—the feast is open to all,
that the earth has thrown off its snow-white covering
and beams with a happy smile.

The earth has waited all winter for its belovèd sun,
and united with it and slaked its passion:
This is the result of that everlasting passion:
all is in blossom, radiant as the fire-bird.
No one dares to stare straight at the sun,
but they love it and are warmed by its soulful heat.
And I myself saw the sun going into
its gold and purple tent in the evening.

8.

UMMER

the summer heat
hen the grass in the meadows and the flowers
ave grown tall and are full of sap,
the shores of the stormy river
ie nomad encampments of the aul were pitched.
he countless herds,
eir croups gleaming on the mowed meadows,
ie horses, foals and young mares
alk out with their well-fed flanks.
ashing out at the horse-flies by the water-hole,
ey swipe with their tails by the water.
he foals frolic round them
nning in circles.
wift-winged ducks and geese
y up and down.
irls and youths,
aring their white arms,
alking softly and gracefully
ut up the tents
ith laughter and jokes.
he Bey returns content
om looking over his herds,
is ambling horse glides along noiselessly.
he old men are in a close circle in the tent,
aiting for the aromatic koumiss

from the venerable old stove.
They are having their unhurried conversations.
The young child, taken in by the servant girl,
whines, capriciously demanding
sweets from his mother.
The Beys sit down
on soft rugs:
the samovars are hissing for them.
Learned men are holding counsel,
their words gallop like horses.
Others nod to them in approval
expressing their agreement.
An elder comes out of the tent
in a white shirt and with a staff.
He querulously asks the shepherds
to chase the herds away from the tents.
They fuss to oblige the Bey.
Hoping that he'll notice, and with deference to his age
they offer him koumiss.

The bold herdsmen since early morning,
pulling up the hems of their cloaks
have been prancing round the mountain village
on their refractory steeds.
The young men, a law to themselves,
at the side by the river,
are firing their rifles and flying their hawks.
Suddenly a blue bird
soars up, flashing away from the hand,

nd catches a duck in flight.
ast days are forgotten,
ere's no way that they can be changed,
nd the old man in the mountain village
pprovingly, laughs loud at them.

39.

The horseman with the golden eagle gallops on the fresh track,
he who seeks the fox will find it.
His horse is a good one, a faithful comrade, a gift from God.
His clothes are those of a hunter.
Suddenly, as his sharp eyes watched from the cover
he saw the tracks coming towards him.
As soon as the direction of the tracks became clear
the eagle's keeper mounts a hill and the beater is below.
The hood was torn off,
its eyes were open and the golden eagle flew up.
If it flew low the fox would slip away,
so the eagle with the blood-lusting eyes shot upwards.
The fox froze when it saw the golden eagle.
It realised that it couldn't escape by running.
Baring its teeth and gnashing them, its hackles raised,
it was ready to fight for its life.
If the hunter was in a good frame of mind, he'd enjoy the sight
and gallop, regardless of the road.
The fox, gritting its forty blade-like teeth,
was no weak opponent for the proud bird of the skies.
He has eight lances with him, he keeps alert.
The knight does not want to wait till morning.
The wings and the tail rush with a whistling noise,
when the golden eagle precipitously drops like a stone.

ow they've joined battle, sparkling and gleaming,
duel of knights to the death:
e golden eagle, predator of the skies, and the fox, the
beast of the earth.
lood is flowing for a man's sake.
/hite snow, black eagle, ginger fox.
ne thinks of a bathing beauty,
fting her black hair with her arms,
ıd it trembles under the palms, like a living stream.
ody white as snow, cheeks crimson, naked,
er black hair hides her rosy face.
hey also remind one of a chivalrous husband and a
beautiful wife,
ɔming together in the cramped bed.
wo wings tremble
hen the eagle grabs the fox and lifts it beneath it.
oth master and bird are proud and triumph.
hey've succeeded in overcoming the fox with all its
tricks.
he elder straps the prey to his saddle,
ıd his moustache grins: 'Let there be scores of them!'
e adjusts his cap swiftly and takes out his snuff—
his soul is satisfied.
lthough there is much prey, as many as the berries on
the mountains,
ıch incident brings joy to the hunter.

There is no shadow of evil-doing in his soul.
When there's hunting there is prey.
Of all the occupations known to mortal man
it is the only one which brings no harm to anybody.
Isn't that clear to all who have
a meditative mind and a pure heart?
But you cannot grasp it if you look down arrogantly
from above.
You cannot imagine the picture unless your eyes are keen
Who listens with attention to every word,
sees everything, and reflects it in his heart.
If anyone reads these words, it should be a hunter,
for nobody can understand them who does not know
the taste of hunting with a hunting bird.

Word One

Whether for good or ill, I have lived my life, travelng a long road fraught with struggles and quarrels, disutes and arguments, suffering and anxiety, and reached hese advanced years to find myself at the end of my tethr, tired of everything. I have realised the vanity and futily of my labours and the meanness of my existence. What hall I occupy myself with now and how shall I live out the est of my days? I am puzzled that I can find no answer to his question.

Rule the people? No, the people are ungovernable. Let his burden be shouldered by someone who is willing to ontract an incurable malady, or else by an ardent youth ith a burning heart. But may Allah spare me this load hich is beyond my powers!

Shall I multiply the herds? No, I cannot do that. Let e young folk raise livestock if they need them. But I shall ot darken the evening of my days by tending livestock to ve joy to rogues, thieves and spongers.

Occupy myself with learning? But how shall I engage scholarship when I have no one to exchange an intellient word with? And then to whom shall I pass on the

knowledge I will have amassed? Whom shall I ask what I do not know myself? What's the good of sitting on a desolate steppe with an *arshin* in hand trying to sell cloth? Too much knowledge becomes gall and wormwood that hastens old age if you have no one by your side to share your joys and sorrows.

Choose the path of the Sufi and dedicate myself to the service of religion? No, I'm afraid that won't do either. This vocation calls for serenity and complete peace of mind. But I have not known peace either in my soul or in my life—and what sort of piety can there be amongst these people, in this land!

Educate children, maybe? No, this, too, is beyond my powers. I could instruct children, true, but I don't know what I should teach them and how.

For what occupation, for what purpose and for what kind of community am I to educate them? How can I instruct them and direct their paths if I don't see where my pupils could usefully apply their learning? And so here too, I have been unable to put myself to any good use.

Well, I have decided at length: henceforth, pen and paper shall be my only solace, and I shall set down my thoughts. Should anyone find something useful here, let him copy it down or memorise it. And if no one has any need of my words, they will remain with me anyway.

And now I have no other concern than that.

Word Two

In my childhood I used to hear the Kazakhs jeering at he Uzbeks:

'You Sarts in wide skirts, you bring your rushes from far to thatch your roofs! You bow and scrape when you neet someone, but you insult him behind his back. You are fraid of every bush; you rattle on without stopping, and nat's why they call you Sart-Surts.'

Encountering Nogais, the Kazakhs would ridicule and cold them, too:

'The Nogai is afraid of the camel, he soon gets tired stride a horse and takes his rest walking. Runaways and oldiers and traders—all of them hail from the Nogais. *Jokai* is what you should be called, not Nogai!'

About the Russians they used to say:

'The red-headed Urus, once he spies an aul, gallops fit o break his neck towards it, permits himself to do whatev-r comes into his head, demands to hear all the rumours nd gossip, and believes everything he is told.'

'My God!' I thought then with pride. 'It turns out that ne whole wide world has no worthier and nobler people nan the Kazakhs!' Such talk rejoiced and entertained me.

But this is what I see now: there is no plant that th
Sarts cannot grow, no land that their merchants have n
visited, and no such thing that their nimble fingers canno
contrive. Their laymen live in peace and seek no enmity
Before there were any Russian merchants around, the Sar
provided the Kazakhs with clothes for the living and bu
ial robes for the dead, and they would buy up from th
Kazakhs droves of cattle that father and son could n
agree to divide between themselves. Now, under th
Russians, the Sarts have adopted the innovations mo
quickly than others. Exalted beys and learnt mullah
craftsmanship and luxury and courtesy—the Sarts have a
these.

I look at the Nogais and see that they can make fi
soldiers and that they bear deprivation stoically. They fac
death with humility, protect schools and honour religion—
they know how to work hard and grow rich, and to dre
up and have fun.

Not we Kazakhs, though: we labour for their beys f
a crust of bread. They will not let our beys into the
homes. 'Hey, you Kazakhs,' they say, 'our floor is not f
your dirty boots to trample on.'

I will not speak of the Russians. We cannot hold a ca
dle even to their servants.

Where has all our erstwhile joyfulness gone?
Where is our merry laughter?

Word Three

Where lies the cause of the estrangement amongst the Kazakhs, of their hostility and ill will towards one another? Why are they insincere in their speech, so lazy, and possessed by a lust for power?

The wise of this world long ago observed: a sluggard is, as a rule, cowardly and weak-willed; a weak-willed man is cowardly and boastful; a braggart is cowardly, stupid and ignorant; an ignoramus has no inkling of honour, while a dishonourable person sponges on the sluggard—he is insatiable, unbridled and good-for-nothing; he bears no good will towards the people around him.

The source of these vices is our people's preoccupation with one thing alone: to own as much livestock as possible and thus gain honour and respect. Had they taken up arable farming or commerce, had they been interested in learning and art, this would never have come to pass.

Parents, having increased their own herds, will do their best to ensure that their children's herds grow ever fatter, so that the livestock can be left in the care of herdsmen and they can indulge in a life of idleness—gorge themselves on meat and *koumiss*, enjoy beautiful women,

and feast their eyes on fast horses.

Eventually, their winter pastures and grasslan become too small and, using their influence or positio they will by hook or by crook buy up, wheedle or seiz pastureland from a neighbour. That person, fleeced as h is, will in turn put pressure on another neighbour, or els will have to leave his native region.

Now, can these people possibly wish one anothe well?

The more poor there are, the cheaper their labour. Th more numerous the destitute, the more abundant the fre winter pasturage. My neighbour is eager for my ruin, and am eager for him to fall into penury. Little by little, ou concealed animosity grows into an open and bitter enmit We bear malice, we litigate, we split into cliques and brib influential people for support, so as to gain an advantag over our opponents, and we scramble for the emolumen of rank.

A loser will not toil and sweat—he will seek affluenc in other, devious ways; he will show no interest in eith commerce or tilling the land—he will side now with on now with another party, selling himself and existing misery and disgrace.

There is no end to pillage on the steppe. If there we unity amongst our people, they would never condone thief who, making adroit use of the support of one group another, continues his brazen robbery.

Honest sons of the steppes are the victims of crimin charges based on false accusations, and are subjected

humiliating interrogations. Witnesses are produced ready to swear to what they have never seen or heard. And all this in order smear an honest person and bar him from high office. If the persecuted man, to save himself, turns for aid to these same rascals, he will sacrifice his honour; if he refuses to bow to them, he is certain to be unjustly charged; he will suffer hardships and privations, unable to find a place and occupation worthy of him.

Having gained power by deceit and trickery, the head of the *volost* avoids honest and modest folk like the plague and seeks allies amongst people of his own kind, crafty and crooked, whom he is fearful of antagonising.

A new saying has gained currency now: It's the person, not the matter, that counts. In other words, success depends not on the rightness of the matter in question, but on the cleverness of the person involved.

The *volost* chiefs are elected for a three-year term. They spend their first year in office listening to all kinds of grievances and complaints: 'Don't forget that we elected you!' Their second year is given over to fighting possible future rivals, and the third year to their campaign for re-election.

What then is left?

Watching my people sink deeper and deeper into discord, I have come to the conclusion that the *volost* chiefs should be elected from among men who have had at least some Russian education, however little. If there are none, or only persons whom people do not wish to nominate, then let the *volost* chiefs be appointed by the *uyezd* author-

ities and the military governor. This would be beneficial in several ways. First of all, ambitious Kazakhs would have their children educated; secondly, the *volost* chiefs would no longer be dependent on the whims of local magnates, but take their orders from the higher authorities. To avoid the inevitable objections and denunciations, an appointee should not be subjected to any local control and verification.

We have had occasion to see the futility of electing *biys* in each *volost*. Not everyone is capable of dispensing justice. In order to hold a council 'on the top of Mount Kultobe', as we say, it is essential to know all the laws passed down from our forefathers: Kasym-khan's 'Radiant Pathway', Esim-khan's 'Ancient Pathway' and Az Tauke-khan's 'Seven Canons'. But even these laws have become outdated with the passage of time and require amendment and infallible interpreters, of whom there are few, if any, amongst our people.

People who know Kazakh ways well say: 'When two *biys* get together, there is sure to be four disputes.' The lack of a supreme judge and the even number of *biys* hearing a case only complicates the adjudication of disputes. Why increase the numbers of *biys*? Would it not be better to elect three educated and intelligent men in each *volost* for an unlimited term of office, only replacing those whose behaviour is unseemly?

Let legal disputes be settled by two arbiters, one chosen by each party, and an intermediary acceptable to both. Only if they failed to ascertain the truth and come to terms

would the dispute be taken to one of the three permanent judges. Then lawsuits would not drag on so long.

Word Four

Observant people long ago noted that foolish laughter resembles drunkenness. Now, drunkenness leads to misbehaviour; a conversation with a soak gives one a headache. Anyone who constantly indulges in senseless merriment ignores his conscience, neglects his affairs and commits unforgivable blunders, for which he can expect to be punished, if not in this world, then in the next.

He who is inclined to meditation is always prudent and reasonable in his actions in this world and in the face of death. Prudence in thought and deed is the keystone of well-being. But does this mean that we should always be downcast? Should our souls know only melancholy, no joy and mirth? Not at all. I am not saying that we should be sorrowful without cause, but that we should stop and think about our heedless, carefree ways and repent, forsaking them for some useful occupation. It is not senseless merriment that heals the soul, but beneficial and rational work.

Only the weak in spirit will withdraw into themselves, abandon themselves to bitter thoughts, without finding the least consolation.

If you laugh at the stupidities of a fool, do so not

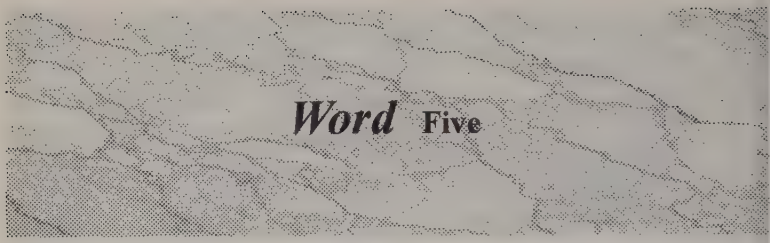
rejoicing in his foolishness, but with a feeling of righteous anger. Such laughter should not be indulged in too often, for it is bitter.

When you see someone who leads a good life, whose kind deeds are worthy of emulation, laugh with a glad heart, with sincere joy. A good example teaches humility and restraint, keeping one from wrong-doing and drunkenness.

Not all laughter deserves approbation. There is also a kind of laughter that does not come from the heart, that God-given vessel, but bursts out in hollow peals just for the sake of forced jollity.

Man comes crying into this world and departs it in sorrow. Between these two events, without fully comprehending the value and uniqueness of the life bestowed upon him, he will burn it up thoughtlessly, squander it in petty quarrels and miserable wrangles, and never know true happiness. He will pause to think only when the sands of life are running out. Only then will he realise that no treasure on earth can prolong his life even for a single day.

To live by lies, deceit and begging is the lot of good-for-nothing rogues. Put your faith in the Lord, and trust in your own powers and abilities. Even the hardest earth will yield good crops to honest and selfless toil.



Word Five

Sorrow darkens the soul, chills the body, numbs the will, and then bursts forth in words or tears. I have seen people praying; 'Oh, Allah, make me as carefree as a babe!' They imagine themselves to be sufferers, oppressed by cares and misfortunes, as though they had more sense than infants. As to their cares and concern, these can be judged from the proverbs: 'If you will live no longer than noon, make provision for the whole day'; 'Even his father becomes a stranger to a beggar'; 'Cattle for the Kazakh is flesh of his flesh'; 'A rich man has a countenance full of light, a poor man—as hard as stone'; 'The *dzighit* and the wolf will find their food along the way';

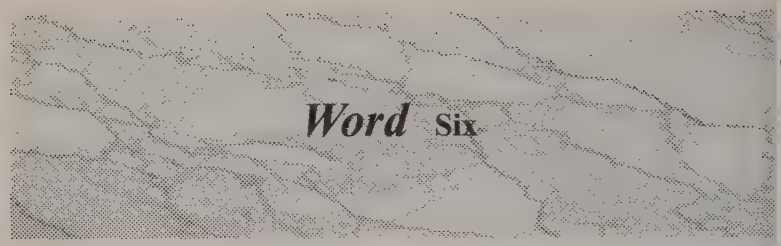
'The herds of exalted men are left to the care of others, except when such men have nothing better to do'; 'The hand that takes also gives'; 'He who has managed to get rich is always in the right'; 'If you can't rely on the bey, don't count on God either'; 'If you are famished, gallop to the place of a funeral feast'; 'Beware of a lake with no shallows and of a people that knows no mercy'. Such proverbs are legion.

Now, what do they tell us? It is not learning and

knowledge, nor peace and justice, that the Kazakh holds dear—his sole concern is how to get rich. So he will twist and turn to cajole some of their riches from other people, and if he does not succeed, he will see the whole world as his enemy. He will have no scruples about fleecing even his own father. It is not customary among us to censure those who gain possession of livestock by trickery, lies, pillage or other crimes.

So, in what way does their mind differ from that of a child? Children are afraid of the blazing hearth, while adults have no fear even of the fires of hell. When they feel ashamed, children would like the earth to swallow them up, but adults know no shame at all. Is it this that makes them superior to children? If we will not give them what we own, if we refuse to let them ruin us and do not descend to their level, they will turn their back on us.

Is this the people whom we should love with all our heart?



Word Six

According to a Kazakh proverb: 'The source of success is unity, and of well-being—life.'

Yet what kind of people are they who live in unity and how do they achieve such accord? The Kazakhs are quite ignorant on this score. They think that unity resides in the common ownership of livestock, chattels and food. If this were so, then what use wealth and what harm in poverty? Would it be worthwhile working hard to grow rich without first getting rid of one's kith and kin? No, unity ought to be in people's minds and not in communal wealth. It is possible to unite people of different origin, religion and views simply by giving them an abundance of livestock. But achieving unity at the price of cattle—that's the beginning of moral decay. Brothers ought to live in amity not because one is dependent on another, but by each relying on his own skills and powers, and his own destiny. Otherwise they will forget God and find no worthy occupation, but will scheme and plot against each other. They will sink to recrimination and slander, they will cheat and deceive. Then what kind of unity could there be?

'Life is the source of well-being...' What kind of life

is meant here? Just existing in order to keep body and soul together? But even a dog is endowed with such an existence. He who treasures such a life, who is plagued by the fear of death, becomes an enemy to life everlasting. Fleeing for his life from the foe, he will be known as a coward; shirking work, he will pass for a ne'er-do-well, he will become an enemy of the good.

No, what the proverb refers to is another kind of life. One that keeps the soul alive and the mind clear. If your body is alive but your soul is dead, words of reason will not reach you, and you will be incapable of earning your living by honest work.

A loafer and a sycophant,
A hanger-on and an impudent fellow,
Valiant in his looks but craven in his heart,
Has no sense of shame...

If you are like that, do not imagine yourself to be alive. A righteous death will then be better than such an existence.

Word Seven

Born into this world, an infant inherits two essentia needs. The first is for meat, drink and sleep. These are the requirements of the flesh, without which the body cannot be the house of the soul and will not grow in height and strength. The other is a craving for knowledge. A baby will grasp at brightly coloured objects, it will put them in its mouth, taste them and press them against its cheek. It will start at the sound of a pipe. Later, when a child hears the barking of a dog, the noises of animals, the laughter or weeping of people, it gets excited and asks about all that it sees and hears: 'What's that? What's that for? Why is he doing that?' This is but the natural desire of the soul, the wish to see everything, hear everything and learn everything.

Without trying to fathom the mysteries of the universe, visible and invisible, without seeking an explanation for everything, one can never be what one should be—a human being. Otherwise, the spiritual life of a person will not differ from the existence of any other living creature.

From the very beginning God separated man from beast by breathing the soul into him. Why then, on grow-

ing up and gaining in wisdom, do we not seek to gratify our curiosity, which in childhood made us forget about food and sleep? Why do we not tread in the path of those who seek knowledge?

It behoves us to strive to broaden our interests and increase the wisdom that nourishes our souls. We should come to realise that spiritual virtues are far superior to bodily endowments, and so learn to subordinate our carnal desires to the dictates of our soul. But no, we have been loath to do that! Raving and croaking, we have not moved farther than the dunghill next to our village. Only in our childhood are we ruled by the soul. When we grew up and gained in strength, we rejected its dictates, we subjugated our soul to the body, and contemplated the things around us with our eyes, but not our minds; we do not trust the impulses of the soul. Satisfied with outward appearances, we make no attempt to uncover inner mysteries, in the vain belief that we shall lose nothing by such ignorance. To the counsel and advice of wise people, we reply: 'You live by your own wits, mine are good enough for me.' Or: 'We'd rather be poor in our own wits than rich in yours.' We are incapable of recognising their superiority and grasping the meaning of their words.

There is not a flicker of fire in our bosom nor any faith in our soul. In what way, then, do we differ from animals if we perceive things only with our eyes? It seems that we were better in our childhood. We were human then, for we sought to learn as much as possible. But today we are worse than the beasts. An animal knows nothing and has

no aim in life. We know nothing, but will argue until we are hoarse; defending our obtusity, we try to pass off our ignorance as knowledge.

Word Eight

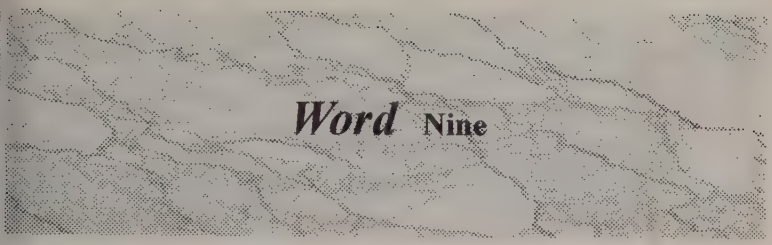
Will anyone heed our advice and listen to our counsels? One man may be a volost chief, another—a biy. If they had had the least desire to become wise and learn sense, would they have sought such posts? These people consider themselves quite clever enough and seek power so as to teach and give guidance to others, as if they themselves had attained the heights of perfection and had nothing further to do but instruct others. Are they the kind who would have the inclination or spare the time to listen to us? Their minds are filled with other concerns: not to offend their superiors inadvertently; not to provoke the anger of a thief, not to cause trouble and confusion among the people, and not to land on the losing end, but to gain some personal advantage. Besides, they must be always helping somebody, getting someone out of trouble. They are always too busy...

The rich? They want for nothing. Be it only for a day, they have wealth and they think they possess the treasures of well-nigh half the world, and they can pay in livestock for whatever they lack. They set their sights high and their ambitions even higher. Honour, conscience and sincerity

are no dearer to them than their herds. They are certain tha
if they own livestock they will be able to bribe even th
Most High. Their herds take the place of everything else t
them—their native land, people, religion, family and learn
ing. Why then should they listen to other people's advice
Some fellow might be inclined to lend an ear, but he has n
time for that. He must feed and water his livestock, sell i
at a premium, protect it from thieves and wolves, shelter i
from the cold, and find someone to do these chores. No
this man is too busy to heed good counsel. When he ha
seen to all this, he will be boasting and bragging, so he ha
no time left for anything else.

As for thieves and scoundrels, they obviously would
not listen anyway.

The poor, meek as sheep, are only concerned abou
getting their daily bread. What good is advice, wisdom and
learning to them when even the rich do not want it? 'Leave
us alone, speak to those who are cleverer than we are,' they
say, as though knowledge were of no use to poor folk
They don't care about anybody, the poor. If they had what
other people have, they would know no worries.

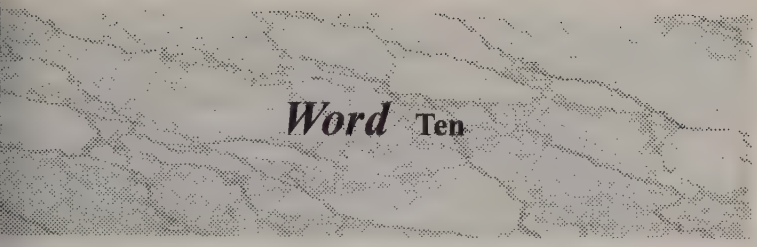


Word Nine

I, too, am a Kazakh. But do I love the Kazakhs or not? If I did, I would have approved of their ways and would have found something, however slight, in their conduct to rejoice or console me, a reason to admire at least some of their qualities, and keep alive a glimmer of hope. But this is not so. Had I not loved them, I would not have spoken to them from the heart or taken counsel with them; I would have not mixed with them and taken an interest in their affairs, asking, 'What are people doing there? What's going on?' I would just have sat back quietly—or wandered off. I have no hope that they will mend their ways or that I may bring them to reason or reform them. So I feel neither of these emotions. But how come? I ought to have opted for one or the other.

Even though I live, I do not consider myself to be alive. I don't know why: maybe because I'm vexed with the people or dissatisfied with myself, or for some other reason. Outwardly alive but completely dead within, that's what I am. Outwardly irate, I feel no anger. Laughing, I am unable to rejoice. The words that I speak and the laughter that I utter seem not to be mine. Everything is alien.

In my younger days it never occurred to me that anyone could forsake his own people. I loved the Kazakhs with all my heart and believed in them. But as I came to know my people better and my hopes began to fade, I found that I lacked the strength to leave my native region and form kinship with strangers. This is why there is a void in my heart now. But then I think, perhaps it's for the better. When dying, I will not lament: 'Alas, I have not tasted this or that joy!..' Not torturing myself with regrets about earthly things, I shall find solace in the life to come.



Word Ten

People pray to God to send them a child. What does a man need a child for? They say that one ought to leave an heir, a son to provide for his parents in their old age and to pray for them after their death. Is that all?

Leaving an heir—what does it mean? Are you afraid there will be no one to look after your property? But why should you care about things you will leave behind? What, are you sorry to leave them to other people? What kind of treasures have you gained to regret them so much?

A good child is a joy, but a bad one is a burden. Who knows what kind of a child God will bestow on you? Or haven't you had enough of the humiliation you have had to swallow all your life? Or have you committed too few misdeeds? Why are you so eager to have a child, to rear yet another scoundrel and doom him to the selfsame humiliations?

You want your son to pray for you after your death. But if you have done good in your lifetime, who will not utter prayers for the repose of your soul? And if you have done only evil, what will be the use of your son's prayers? Will he perform good deeds in your stead—those you have

failed to accomplish?

If you beg for a child who will experience the joys o the next world, it means that you wish him an early death But if you want him to secure for yourself the joys of thi world, then can a Kazakh beget a son who, on growing t manhood, will show care and concern for his parents an protect them from suffering? Can such a people and father like you raise a worthy son of this kind?

You want him to feed and clothe you in your decrepi old age? A vain hope, too! First of all, will you live t reach your dotage? Second, will your son grow up so mer ciful as to care for you in your old age? If you happen t own livestock—there will always be someone ready t look after you. If you have none, who knows who will pro vide for you and how. And who knows whether your so will increase your wealth or squander what you hav gained by your labour?

Well, supposing God has heard your prayers an given you a son. Will you manage to educate him well No, you will not! Your own sins will be compounded b those of your son.

From the very outset of his life you will be telling hir lies, promising him now this, now that. And you will b glad when you manage to deceive him. Then whom ca you blame when your son grows up a liar? You will teac him bad language and to revile other people, you will cor done his misdeeds: 'Now, don't touch this obstinate lad and encourage his cheekiness. For his schooling, yo choose a mullah whom you pay little, just to teach him t

read and write; you teaching him to be cunning and underhand, you make him suspicious of his peers and graft on bad inclinations . Is that your upbringing? And you expect kindness from a son like that?

In the same way, people pray to God for wealth. What does man need wealth for? You have prayed to God? Yes, you have, and God has given, but you won't take! He has endowed you with strength to work and prosper. But do you use this for honest labour? No! God granted you the power to learn, a mind capable of assimilating knowledge, but who knows what you used it for. Who will fail to prosper if he works hard, perseveres without tiring and makes good use of his mind? But you don't need that! You pray to get rich by intimidating, cheating and begging from other people. What kind of prayer is that? It is simply plunder and beggary on the part of a person who has lost his conscience and honour.

Supposing you have chosen this path and gained possession of livestock. Well, use it to get an education! If not for yourself, then for your son. There can be neither faith nor well-being without an education. Without learning, no prayers or fasts or pilgrimages will achieve their purpose. I have yet to see a person who, having acquired wealth by dishonest means, has put it to good use. Ill-gotten gains are likewise ill spent. And nothing remains of such wealth save the bitterness of disappointment, anger and anguish of the soul.

While he has wealth, he will boast and swagger. Having frittered it away, he will brag about his former

affluence. Impoverished, he will stoop to begging.

Word Eleven

How do our people make living? There are two ways. One is by stealing. A thief hopes to grow fat on what he has stolen, and a bey seeks to increase his herds by recovering what has been stolen from him and more besides. Those in authority will fleece both the bey and the thief by promising the former to help recover his stolen livestock and the latter to evade justice. Your average man will inform on the thief to the authorities, at the same time aiding and abetting him by buying up the stolen goods for a song. Then there is another way: ordinary people are persuaded by crooks to resort to tricks they would otherwise never have dreamt of. Do this or that, they say, and you'll be rich and famous, you will be regarded as invulnerable and your opponents will fear you. Fanning evil passions and setting people against one another, the swindlers hope to be of service to someone and profit by this.

That's the way they live: the grandee by aiding the bey and abetting the thief, and the poor man by sucking up to the powers that be and backing them in disputes, siding now with one, now with another party, and selling dirt-cheap his honour, his wife, his children, and his kith and kin.

If there were no thieves and swindlers, our peopl would think carefully. They would be only too glad t work honestly and seek goodness and wisdom if the be could make do with what he has, and the poor man, with out losing hope and faith, could earn what he lacks.

Despite themselves, the common people get involve in dirty business. Who is strong enough to uproot this evil Will honour and pledges, loyalty and conscience sink int oblivion?

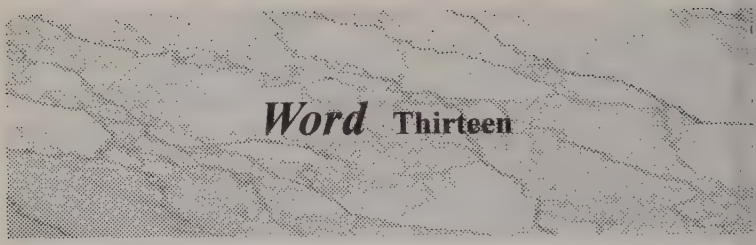
There might be a force capable of taming the thie But what about the bey who out of greed connives with th swindler—who will make him see reason and how?

Word Twelve

When someone teaches the Word of God, whether he does it well or badly, we would sooner bite off our tongue than forbid his preaching, for there is nothing reprehensible in good intentions. He may lack sufficient enlightenment, but let him preach. However, this man ought to remember two essential conditions.

First of all, he must be certain in his faith; then, he must not be satisfied with what he knows, but continually improve his mind. He who abandons learning deprives himself of a divine blessing, and you will look in vain for any benefit from his teaching. Indeed, what good is it if he winds a turban around his head, keeps the fasts rigorously, offers up prayers and affects piety, but does not know where in a particular prayer is the right place to repeat or pause?

A person who is negligent, who is not strict in his ways and is not capable of compassion cannot be considered a believer: without self-discipline and consistency one can not keep iman, the faith, in one's soul.



Word Thirteen

Iman—this is the unshakeable faith in one, all-powe
ful Creator, about whose essence and existence it
ordained to us to learn from the revelations of His Prophe
may Allah bless his name.

There are two ways of believing.

Some simply accept the faith, perceiving the vit
need for it and its truth, and strengthen their belief b
means of reasonable arguments. We call this yakini ima
or true faith.

Others believe by drawing wisdom from books an
from the words of the mullah. Such people need speci
dedication to the object of their faith and spiritual streng
in order to withstand thousands of temptations and n
waver even in the face of death. This is the taklidi iman
traditional faith.

To keep iman within one's self, a person must have
courageous heart, firm will and confidence in his power
But what about those who lack the knowledge to be amon
the adherents of yakini iman, or those who have no fir
belief, who too easily succumb to temptations and cajoler
who for gain will call black white, and white black, wh

will perjure themselves by passing off lies as truth and so cannot be called taklidi iman believers? May Allah preserve us from such people! Each and every one of us should remember that there can be no other iman save these. Let apostates not reckon on infinite divine grace; they deserve neither Allah's forgiveness nor the Prophet's intercession. Cursed be the man who believes in the false proverbs: 'The edge of the sword is sharper than an oath' and 'There is no sin that Allah will not pardon.'

Word Fourteen

Has man anything more precious than his heart? Calling someone a man of brave heart, people respect him as a batyr. They have but a poor idea of any other virtues of the human heart. Mercy, kindness, the capacity to treat a stranger as a dear brother and wish him all the blessings one would wish one's self—all these are the commands of the heart. And love likewise comes from the heart. The tongue that obeys the heart will tell no lie. Only hypocrites forget about the heart. Yet those 'men of brave heart' often prove to be unworthy of praise. Unless they value courtesy and honour their vows, are averse to evil and lead lost souls along the straight and narrow path, not following the crowd like a miserable cur, unless they stand up in defence of a righteous cause in the face of all difficulties and not turn from the truth when this is so easy to do—then the heart that beats in the breast of those respected as batyrs is that of a wolf, not a human being.

Indeed, the Kazakh is also a child of mankind. Many of the Kazakhs stray from the path of truth not through any deficiency of reason but because they lack the courage and staunchness in their heart to accept and follow wise coun

sels. I do not believe many of those who argue that they have done evil through ignorance. No, they have enough knowledge, but their shameful weakness of will and laziness cause them to ignore it. Having stumbled once, few will be strong enough to mend their ways.

Those who are praised as stout dzhighits, brave and clever, will more often than not put each other up to dark, sordid deeds. Their blind aping of one another and daredevil capers are a frequent cause of misfortunes.

If a man who has indulged in evil and in unbridled bragging cannot stop and chasten himself, and does not attempt to cleanse himself before God or his own conscience—how can he be called a dzhighit?

One may well question whether he can be called a man.

Word Fifteen

There is an essential difference, in my view, between intelligent and stupid people.

Coming into this world, man cannot live without being attracted and excited by the fascinating things around him. Those days of questioning and passionate interests remain in a person's memory as the brightest period of life.

A sensible man will interest himself in worthy and serious matters, he will steadfastly pursue his objectives and even his recollections of his past struggles to attain them will be heard with pleasure and warm the hearts of his listeners. Such a person will not betray even a shadow of regret over the years he has lived.

A frivolous man dissipates his time in worthless, futile and absurd undertakings. When he comes to his senses, he realises that his best years have swiftly passed in vain, and his belated regrets bring no consolation. In his younger days he behaves as if youth were eternal, never doubting that even more captivating delights are in store for him. Yet all too soon, losing his former strength and agility, he becomes good for nothing.

Another temptation lurks in the path of passionate souls. Success—attained or within their grasp—intoxicates their senses and makes them dizzy. The flush of success clouds their reason and causes them to commit blunders; a man like this attracts attention even against his will, he becomes an object of gossip and a butt of ridicule.

Reasonable people keep their wits about them even in such critical moments; they will not lose their senses but rather show restraint and not expose their feelings to all and sundry.

But a stupid person is like a horseman galloping on a steed without a bridle: lifting his eyes to the sky as if crazy and having lost his cap in his frenzy, off he goes and does not see that the edge of his chapan covers the horse's rear...

This is what I have observed.

If you wish to be counted among the intelligent, then ask yourself once a day, once a week, or at least once a month: 'How do I live? Have I done anything to improve my learning, my worldly life or my life hereafter? Will I have to swallow the bitter dregs of regret later on?'

Or perhaps you don't know or remember how you have lived and why?

Word Sixteen

The Kazakh does not worry whether his prayer please God or not. He does what other people do: he get up and falls face to the ground in supplication. He treat God as though He were a merchant who has come to co lect a debt: 'That's all I have, take it if You will, but if Yo will not—don't ask me to get livestock out of nowhere The Kazakh will not take trouble to learn and purify hi faith: 'Well, that's all I know, I can't get any wiser at m age. It's enough that people cannot reproach me for no praying. And if my speech is uncouth, that doesn't matte in the least.'

But is his tongue made differently from other peo ple's, I wonder?

Word Seventeen

Will, Reason and Heart once asked Knowledge to set-
le their argument about who was the most important
among them.

Said Will: 'Hey, Knowledge, you ought to know that
nothing can attain perfection without me: to know one's
self, one has to persevere in learning, and this is impossi-
ble without me; only with my aid can a person serve the
Most High and worship Him tirelessly, achieve wealth and
skill, respect and a successful career. Do I not preserve
people from unworthy passions and curb them? Do I not
caution them against sin, envy and temptations? Do I not
help them to hold back, at the last moment, from the edge
of an abyss? How can these two argue with me?

Said Reason: 'I am the only one capable of discerning
which of your words are useful and which harmful,
whether in this life or the next. I alone can comprehend
your language. Without me, no one can avoid evil, acquire
knowledge or benefit himself. Why do these two argue
with me? What use would they be without me?'

Said Heart: 'I am the master of the human body. I am
the source of its blood and the soul resides in me; life is

inconceivable without me. Those who lie in soft beds deprive of their slumber; I make them toss and turn, think ing about the destitute with no roof over their heads, fam ished and freezing. I bid the young to honour their elder and be tolerant to little ones. But people do not seek t keep me pure and therefore suffer. Were I pure, I woul make no distinction among people. I admire virtue an rebel against malice and violence. Self-respect, con science, mercy, kindness—all these proceed from me What are these two worth without me? How dare the argue with me?

Having heard all the three out, Knowledge replied:

'What you say is right, Will, and you have many othe virtues you haven't mentioned. Nothing can be achieve without your participation. Yet you also conceal cruelt equal to your strength. You are resolute in the service o good, but you can be just as resolute in serving evil. Thi is what is wrong in you.

'You, too, are right, Reason! One cannot do withou you in this life either. Thanks to you people learn about th Creator, and are initiated into the mysteries of the tw worlds. But this is not the limit of your possibilities Cunning and wickedness also come from you. Both goo and bad people rely on you, and you serve both faithfully Therein lies your fault.

'My mission is to reconcile you. It would be good Heart were the arbiter in this dispute of yours.

'You have many paths before your, Reason, but Hea cannot take all of them. It rejoices at your righteous unde

takings and will gladly assist you in them, but it will not follow you if you plot mischief and evil; it will even turn from you in disgust.

'Now, Will! You have plenty of energy and courage, but you, too, can be restrained by Heart. It will not hinder you in a well-meaning deed, but it will bind your hand and foot if your goal is futile and wicked.

'You should join hands with Heart and obey it in everything! If all three of you live in peace within a man, the dust of his feet will open the eyes of the blind. If you two cannot reach accord, I shall give preference to Heart. Prize humanity above all! The Most High will judge us by this. So it is set down in the Holy Scriptures,' said Knowledge.

Word Eighteen

Man should dress modestly and keep himself clean and tidy. Only fops spend more on their clothes than they can afford and worry too much over their appearance.

Fops show off in various ways. One will pay great attention to his face, cultivate his moustache and beard, pamper his body and swagger—now lifting an eyebrow languorously, now tapping his fingers or strutting with arms akimbo; another will adopt a studied carelessness in his foppery and, in an off-hand way, affecting to be 'a simple fellow', will drop hints in passing about his Arabian horse or his rich raiment: 'Oh, it's nothing in particular!' He goes out of his way to attract the attention of his betters, arouses envy among his equals, and is regarded among his inferiors as the acme of refinement and luxury. They say about him: 'What has he got to complain of with a such a horse and clothes like that!'

But this is absurd and shameful.

No one should get carried away by such nonsense, for otherwise he will find it hard to look like a normal human being again.

In the word kerbez [fop] I discern a relationship with

the words ker [conceited] and kerden [haughty]—something that ought to warn people against a vice of this kind.

A human being should distinguish himself by virtue of his reason, knowledge, will, conscience and goodness. Only a fool thinks he can gain distinction by other means.

Word Nineteen

A child is not born a reasonable being. It is only by listening and watching, examining everything by touching and tasting, that it learns what is good and what is bad. The more a child sees and hears, the more it knows. One may learn a good deal by listening to wise men. It is not enough to be endowed with a brain—only by hearing and memorising the teachings of the learnt and by avoiding vices one can grow up a complete person.

But if one listens to wise words either with excessive enthusiasm or, conversely, paying too little attention, without asking what may not be clear, trying to get to the heart of the matter or drawing one's own conclusions, even though one may feel the wisdom and justice of such good counsels—what is the use of listening?

What can you talk about with a man who does not know the value of words?

As one sage put it: better to feed a pig that recognises you...

Word Twenty

All of us know: nothing can overrule fate. A feeling of satiety is characteristic man; it does not come of one's own volition, but is predestined by fate. Having once experienced satiety, one will no longer be able to get rid of it. Even if you do your utmost and manage to shake it off, it will pursue and overwhelm you nonetheless.

A good many things cause satiety and surfeit. There is nothing more or less with which a man cannot be sated: food, amusements, fashion, feasts and parties, the desire to excel others, and women. Sooner or later, discovering the vanity and viciousness of all that, he will become disenchanted and indifferent. Like everything else in this world, man's life and his destiny are subject to change. No living creature on earth can remain quiescent. So where could the constancy of feelings come from?

Satiety is the lot even of clever people who seek perfection in life, who know the worth of many things, who are fastidious and can perceive the vanity of human existence. He who has realised the transitory nature of earthly joys will grow weary of life.

I think to myself: blessed is he who is silly and carefree.

Word Twenty-One

It is hard to avoid at least a small degree of self-satisfaction and complacency. I have identified two kinds: pride and boastfulness.

A proud man has a high estimation of his own worth. He will do his utmost to ensure that he is not regarded as an ignoramus and an unreliable person who doesn't keep his promises, as ill-mannered, arrogant and a shameless liar, a spiteful critic and a crook. Aware of the baseness of these vices, he will aspire to be above them. This quality is peculiar to a man of conscience, reasonable and high-minded. He dislikes to hear people singing his praises but, on the other hand, will allow no one to sully his name.

A braggart, on the other hand, does his best to be talked about as much as possible. Let everyone know that he is a batyr, rich and of noble of descent...! Yet what he overlooks is that people may also say things about him that he would not in the least like to hear. But, to the tell the truth, the other kind of fame—notoriety—doesn't much bother him. Such braggarts are usually of three types.

The first is eager to gain fame abroad, amongst strangers. This is an ignorant fellow, but he still retains

some human virtues.

The second wants to be famous in his own tribe. This type is a complete ignoramus and scarcely human.

The third one shows off before his family or in his native village, for no outsider would ever approve of his boasting. This one is the most ignorant of all, no longer a man.

He who strives for praise among strangers will seek to distinguish himself amongst his own tribe. He who desires acclaim from his tribe will strive for plaudits from his nearest and dearest. And he who is after the praise of his family is sure he will get it by extolling and praising himself to the skies.

Word Twenty-Two

I wonder whom amongst the Kazakhs of today I could possibly love or respect.

I would have respected a bey, but there are no true beys any more; even if there is one, he is not the master of his will and his wealth. At bitter enmity with some, he will, as a precaution, give away his livestock to others and eventually finds himself beholden to a good hundred people. He believes, in his stupidity, that he has shown generosity by responding to their humble requests, but in fact he becomes dependent on them. You would call him neither generous nor merciful. In his native land he struggles against his own people, squandering his wealth and currying favour with unworthy men. When the beys are at loggerheads, rogues of every kind appear, and they intimidate the beys and live at their expense.

I would have respected a myrza, but now you cannot find a truly generous one; as to those who give out their livestock right and left, they are as many of these as stray dogs. Some part with livestock of their own free will in a bid to gain some advantage, while others do it reluctantly—these often do so just to make a show to gain the reputation

of a myrza, running around as if he had salt on his backside; yet, more often than not, they become the prey of wicked people.

I would have respected a volost chief and a biy, but on our steppe there is neither divine nor human justice. Power bought by servility or with money is not worth much.

I could have respected a strong man, but I see that everyone among us has the strength to do evil deeds one cannot find anybody prepared to do good.

I wish I could find a clever man to honour. Yet there is none ready to use his intelligence to serve the cause of conscience and justice, while one and all will be quick to guile and perfidy.

I might have respected a feeble beggar, but he is not without sin either. It does not matter that he can't even climb on the back of a prostrate camel. If he had the strength, he would find the dexterity to pilfer a thing or two.

Who is there left? The cunning and grasping! There is no stopping these until they ruin others completely...

Whom, then, shall we love and pray for? The stinking volost chiefs and biys cannot be considered. There remains only the peaceable bey who, by virtue of his meekness, lives by the saying: 'If you want to prosper, avoid discord!' Such a man incurs the displeasure of all and sundry, even though he may give away half of his wealth and tries, to no avail, to protect the other half from thieves and ruffians.

There is nothing to be done: him shall we pity and pray for.

As it is, I have found no one else.

Word Twenty-Three

There is but one joy and one consolation which, like a curse, hangs over the Kazakh.

He rejoices when he meets a wicked man or sees some wicked deed, saying, 'May Allah preserve us from that! Even he considers himself a worthy man, and compared to him, others are as pure as babes.' But did Allah say that it is enough for him to be better than such-and-such a person? Or perhaps clever people promised he would not be counted among the wicked if he should find someone more ignorant and vicious than himself? But can you become better by comparing yourself with a scoundrel? Good is learnt from good people. In a race it is understandable to ask yourself how many runners are still ahead of you, not how many fast horses are behind. Does it make to a loser any happier whether there were five or ten Arab steeds behind him?

Now, in what does the Kazakh find consolation? Says he: 'We are not the only ones like that, everybody does it. Better not to stand out from the crowd and to stick with the majority. A feast that you celebrate with everyone is the greatest feast.' But did Allah bid him to live only in the

midst of a crowd? And has Allah no power over multitudes? Has the Most High not chains enough to fetter the throng? Can everyone attain the highest knowledge, or is it accessible to only a chosen few? Are all people equally endowed with genius, or just one in a thousand? Who says that the multitude cannot be humbled? If the people are stricken by disease, is it not good if half of them remain healthy? Don't you need someone with a good knowledge of the lie of the land when thousands who lack it are wandering in the wilderness? Which is better for a traveller: if all his horses starve to death all at once, or only half of them? Which is better: if all of the people suffer from dzhut or at least half of them survive? What consolation is it to a fool if there are thousands of other dolts around him? Will a suitor win his intended bride if he tells her that all his family suffers from bad breath? Will his betrothed be comforted by the thought that he is not the only one?

Word Twenty-Four

There are more than two thousand million people living on earth now, they say. We, Kazakhs, number more than two million. *

The Kazakhs are unlike any other people in their desire for wealth and in their quest for knowledge, in their appreciation of art, in showing their friendliness and strength, and in boasting or enmity.

We fight with each other, we ruin each other and spy on each other before our neighbour has time to blink.

The world has cities with a population above three million. There are people who have travelled three times round the world.

Shall we, indeed, continue to live like this, lying in wait for one another, remaining the meanest people on earth? Or shall we see happier days when people forget theft, deception, backbiting and enmity, and turn their minds to knowledge and crafts, when they learn to obtain their wealth in honest ways? I doubt if such days will ever come. Nowadays, two hundred people hanker after a hundred head of livestock. Will they live in peace before they have destroyed one another in this scramble?

* Abai's figure is incorrect. According to the 1897 census, there were 4,084,000 Kazakhs. (See Y. E. Volodarsky: Russia's Population in 400 Years: 16th to 20th Centuries. Moscow, 1973, p.3)

Word Twenty-Five

It would be good if Kazakh children could get an education. To begin with, it would be enough to teach them Turkic letters. Yet such is our irreligious land that before we send our children to school, we have to acquire wealth besides, they ought to learn the Persian and the Arabic languages. But can those who are hungry keep a clear mind care about honour and show diligence in learning? Poverty and quarrels within tribes and families breed thievery, violence and greed. If you have livestock, your belly will be full. A craving for knowledge and a craft will come next. Then people will start thinking about getting an education and teaching their children at least something.

One should learn to read and write Russian. The Russian language is a key to spiritual riches and knowledge, the arts and many other treasures. If we wish to avoid the vices of the Russians while adopting their achievements, we should learn their language and study their scholarship and science, for it was by learning foreign tongues and assimilating world culture that the Russians have become what they are. Russian opens our eyes to the world. By studying the language and culture of other

nations, a person becomes their equal and will not need to make humble requests. Enlightenment is useful for religion as well.

He who lives his life fawning and cringing will be ready to sell his mother and father; he will sell his family, his faith and conscience for the sake of a condescending pat on the back from a superior. Some fellow will bow and scrape, not caring that he shows his bare behind, and all to win an approving smile from some official.

Russian learning and culture are a key to the world heritage. He who owns this key will acquire the rest without too much effort.

Some of the Kazakhs who have their children taught in Russian schools will do so just so they can use their children's literacy as a proof of their own superiority when quarrelling with their kinsfolk. This should not be your motivation. Seek to teach your children to earn their bread by honest and purposeful work, and let other people follow your example; then we shall not endure the arbitrary ways of Russian grandees, for they have no law that applies equally to all. We ought to educate ourselves, learn what other people know so as to become their equals and be a shield and a pillar for our people. As yet no outstanding individuals have appeared among the young people who have received a Russian education, but this is because their parents and kin spoil them and lead them astray. Even so, they are far better that those who have received no education at all. Yet it is a pity that all their learning goes no further than interpreting other people's words. Well-to-do

folks rarely send their children to school: they would rathe send the children of paupers to be chastised and humiliat ed by Russian teachers. But what can these unfortunat ones learn there?

Quarrelling with their kinsfolk, some will exclaim 'Rather than suffer your insults, I'd send my son off as a recruit and let my hair and beard grow!' Such people have no fear of divine punishment or sense of shame. What will the offspring of such a person achieve even if he attends school? Will he derive much benefit from it? Will he go further than others? He doesn't give a rap for learning: he goes to school, sits for a while and then he goes away. No a sign of eagerness or diligence! His father hardly agrees to his son getting an education unless someone else foots the bill. Will such a man part with his wealth for his child's schooling?

Here's a piece of advice for you: you don't have to get a wife for your son or leave him ample wealth, but you must give him a Russian education without fail, even if you have to part with all have earned. This is worth any sacrifice.

If you honour God and have any shame, if you want your son to be a real man, send him to school! Don't begrudge the expense!

For if he remains an unlettered scoundrel, who will benefit? Will he be a solace to you? Will he be happy himself? And will he be able to do any good for his own people?

Word Twenty-Six

The Kazakh is elated if his horse wins a race, if a wrestler on whom he has wagered wins a bout, or if his hound or falcon does well in the chase. I wonder if there is anything in life that gives him greater joy? I doubt it!

But what great pleasure is there in seeing one creature excel another in agility or speed, or one wrestler flinging another to the ground? It is not the man himself, nor even his son for that matter, who has been successful! By going into raptures for the most trifling cause, he wants to annoy his neighbour and make him envious. Truly, the Kazakh has no worse enemy than another Kazakh!

It is common knowledge that to provoke envy on purpose is contrary to the Shariah laws, one's own interests and sound reason. What comfort has the Kazakh from stirring up other people's animosity? Why does he enjoy it? And why are people so vexed at the success of the more fortunate, considering themselves humiliated?

Fast racehorses are found now in this village, now in that; a good falcon or hunting dog comes into the hands of now one man, now another. And the strongest men don't all hail from the same aul either. All these qualities are not

man's handiwork. Those who have once come first an once triumphed, will not remain the fastest and stronge forever. Why then, knowing that, are people as vexed as some dark scheme or vile deed of theirs had come to ligh Why do they suffer as though they had been brought low

The reason is not hard to find: ignorant people wi rejoice over any trivial, foolish thing. Out of their mind and intoxicated with delight, they don't what they are say ing or doing. They feel ashamed of what is not in the lea shameful, but behave in the most scandalous fashion with out blushing.

These are the marks of ignorance and recklessness. you say that to a Kazakh, he will listen and assent: 'Ye that's true!' But you should not be taken in by his words– he is just like the majority. Though he sees and understand all that, he is like a stubborn creature who cannot give u his wicked ways. And no one will be able to dissuade an check him, or bring him to his senses. Having made mi deeds his law, he will never renounce them. Only great fea or death can wean him from his bad habits.

You will not encounter a man here who, admitting h errors, will try to curb himself.

Word Twenty-Seven

Here are the words of the great Socrates about serving ıe omnipotent Creator, spoken in conversation with his upil, the scholar Aristodemos, who frequently ridiculed elievers.

'Well, Aristodemos, do you think there are people in ıe world whose creations are worthy of admiration?'

'There are many of them, master,' replied Aristo-emos.

'Name at least one of them.'

'I admire Homer and his epic poems, the tragedies of ophocles, the ability of some people to be reincarnated in ther forms; I also admire the paintings of Zeuxis.' (Here ristodemos cited several other great names.)

'Who, do you think, is more worthy of admiration: ıe who creates a lifeless image of man, or the Most High, ho created man endowed with reason and a living soul?'

'The latter, certainly. But only if his creations are the oduct of reason, not pure chance.'

'The world has many useful things. The purpose of ome is obvious, while the purpose of others cannot be vined by their outward form. What do you think: which

of them have been wrought by reason and which b
chance?'

'Certainly, the things of which the purpose is obvio
are created by reason,' replied Aristodemos.

'Good. Creating man, the Most High endowed hi
with five senses, knowing they would be necessary f
man. He gave him eyes to see and enjoy the beauty of t
world. He provided eyelids to open and close the eye
lashes to protect the eyes from wind and dust, and ey
brows to divert the sweat trickling down from the for
head.

'Without ears,' Socrates went on, 'we would hav
been unable to hear either harsh or sweet sounds, and w
would have been unable to enjoy singing and musi
Without a nose, we would have been incapable of disti
guishing different smells, we would have never bee
attracted by sweet fragrances and repelled by foul odour
Lacking a tongue and the roof of the mouth, we woul
have never been able to tell what is sweet from what is bi
ter, what is soft from what is hard.

'Is it not for a good purpose that all this has bee
granted us?

'Our eyes and our nose lie close to the mouth t
enable us to see and smell what we are eating. The oth
essential, but repugnant orifices lie far from the nob
organs that are found on the head.

'Does it not attest that God has created us wit
thought?

Pondering for a while, Aristodemos acknowledge

at the Creator was truly omnipotent, and He wrought His orks with great love.

'Then tell me,' said Socrates, 'why does every living reature have a tender love for its progeny, why does it ate death and endeavour to live as long as possible, and hy is it concerned to perpetuate its kind? All living eings are created for the purpose of life and its continuaon. Was it not out of love that God has made them capae of loving life and giving life?

'How can you believe, Aristodemos, that none save ourself, a man, can possess reason?' Socrates continued. Does not the human body resemble the earth on which an treads? Is not the water of your body a drop of the rthly water? Where does your reason come from? Whatever its origin, it is thanks to the soul granted to you at you have become a vessel of such high intelligence. ou perceive the perfection, wholeness and harmony of the w whereby nature is created, you see and wonder, but ou cannot comprehend what you see.

'Now, what do you think, is nature the purposeless utcome of chance or begotten by the possessor of infinite ason? The mystery lying beyond human ken can be xplained if not by the will of reason, then by the force of mmutable laws, which wisely co-ordinated the purpose of l creation.'

'You have spoken truly, master,' replied the pupil. 'It clear that the Creator possesses sublime intelligence. I o not doubt His omnipotence. Yet I do not cease to wonr why the almighty Creator should need my prayers.'

'You are mistaken, Aristodemos! If there is someon who cares for your well-being, you are beholden to hi Must such a simple truth be explained to you?'

'But I do not know whether he cares about me or no said Aristodemos.

'Then look at the animals and look at yourself. Do w perceive reality in the same way? Man is capable of thinl ing about his past, present and future. An animal has but vague idea of past and present, and it cannot think of th morrow. Compare the outward appearance of man an beast. Man stands upright on two legs, the better to se what surrounds him. He can subjugate any animal to h will. The animals, however, rely only on their limbs an wings, they are unable to subdue their own kind. Had Go created man as helpless as animals, he would have bee good for nothing. Man has been created the master of a living things upon earth. Even if animals possessed huma intelligence, their outward form would have hardl matched the capacity to toil, or teach oratory and virtu Think, can a bull build a town, make tools and become skilled artisan? The fact that God has endowed man wit high intelligence and has placed this intelligence in such perfect body, combining both spiritual power and mora beauty, is proof that God made man with loving care. A that considered, is not humankind obliged to worshi God?'

Thus the master concluded his speech.

Word Twenty-Eight

Muslims! The world is peopled by the rich and by the oor, the healthy and the sickly, the wise and the stupid, the ood and the wicked. If someone asks why this is so, you ill reply: 'Such is the will of Allah.'

It sometimes happens, however, that Allah bestows ches upon a despised loafer, while some person who wor-ips God and toils honestly lives from hand to mouth and n barely feed his wife and children. A quiet, harmless an is often sick and feeble, while some scoundrel or thief joys excellent health. The same parents may have one ever and one stupid son. Allah exhorts everybody to be rtuous and live righteously. He directs the righteous ong the right path, and sinners long the crooked path, warding the righteous with the bliss of paradise and sin-rs with the torments of Hell. Does this not contradict vine mercy and justice? Both people and their goods long to Allah. And He disposes of His property as He shes.

How to understand His actions?

To grant that the Creator is infallible, while ascribing perfections and errors to Him, means that we keep silent

from fear of Him. If this were the case, what would a mo
tal gain by all his labours and efforts? If everything com
by the will of the Creator, then people bear no blam
Whether doing good or evil, are they not fulfilling t
Lord's will?

A reasonable man should know that it is the duty of
believer to do good. A just cause need not fear the test
reason. If freedom is not bestowed upon reason, then wh
about the truth: 'Let him who possesses reason know me
If our religion has a flaw, why then forbid a reasonab
creature to think about it? What would religion have res
ed upon if there had been no reason? Good wrought wit
out faith—what is it worth? You should understand a
believe that good and evil were created by God, but it
not He who performs them. God has created wealth a
poverty, but it is not He who makes human beings rich
poor. God has created diseases, but it is not He who mak
people suffer from them. For otherwise everything wou
be dust and ashes.

Word Twenty-Nine

Some Kazakh sayings merit attention and some do not, or they do not carry anything divine or human in them.

The Kazakhs say: 'If you live in need, forget your name.' Cursed be the life that knows no shame! But if the proverb counsels one not to shun any hard work, however lowly, there is nothing shameful in such work. An upright man should earn his bread honestly, not live on alms or sit back in indolence.

'A clever fellow can set even the snow on fire', 'You can get anything, if you know how to ask'. These are words condemned by God! Is it not better to get riches from the earth by the sweat of your brow rather than rely on cunning and beg for crumbs from another man's table?

'If your name is unknown, set the field on fire.' But what need do you have of notoriety?

'Better one day a as a stallion than a hundred days as a gelding.' But what's the good of one day spent in wild dissipation that leaves only ravages in its wake?

'Even an angel will stray from the path at the sight of gold.' What does an angel need gold for? By this saying people merely try to justify their avarice.

'A treasure chest is dearer than father and mother, bu
your own life is dearer than a palace of gold.' Now, wha
price can be placed on the life of the scoundrel who value
a treasure chest more than his parents? Only a person with
out reason and honour can exchange father and mother fo
gold. Parents work to get rich for the good of their chi
dren, and he who equates his parents with treasure com
mits an ungodly deed.

One should be cautious about repeating proverbs bor
of bigotry and thoughtlessness.

Word Thirty

What we call 'boastful windbags' are found amongst ur people, even if you put forty of them to the test, you on't find one who can be of help. What are they good or? They lack good sense and self-esteem, they are nar-w-minded and shallow, without valour, humanity or con-ience.

Some fellow will fling over his shoulder: 'Don't both- me! Am I not better than others? Is my head strung to nother man's saddle? Does he put meat into my pot or ve me livestock for milk?'

Or he may speak out sharply with reckless resolve, Why should I spare myself life? Is my life really worth uch? I'm ready to brave bullets or exile for a noble use! We die but one death!'

Have you ever encountered a Kazakh whose deeds are keeping with such words? For myself, I have never seen yone who was resigned to death, but no one will admit eir fear of it. At times, true, any of them will make as if tting his throat with the palm of his hand in a gesture of crificial readiness: 'Let me be slain on this very spot!'

Had these words been sincere, their speaker could

have felled us if not by his intelligence, then by his incred
ible courage. Yet what shall we call one whose threats ar
directed only at cowards all set to creep into the neares
hole if trouble is brewing? This is nothing more than bogu
bravery to scare the faint-hearted into admitting: 'Hi
wrath is terrible indeed!'

My God! If he were good at heart, generous an
unselfish, if he were brave and true to his word, could hi
good points be not seen in his face?

This fellow is one of those dishonourable types c
whom it is said: 'A brazen face has tireless jaws.'

Word Thirty-One

We can name four means that promote the perception
ıd memorisation of what is heard:

First, you should acquire spiritual firmness and deter-
ination;

secondly, you should heed wise counsels attentively
ıd with an open heart, eager to grasp the meaning of what
said;

thirdly, you should ponder over these wise words and
peat them over and over again so as to imprint them in
ur memory;

fourthly, you should avoid harmful states of the mind
d resist them even in the face of temptation.

These states of mind are: careless sloth, indifference,
nseless amusement, the inclination to morose reflection
d destructive passion. These vices can destroy both your
nd and your talent.

Word Thirty-Two

Those who seek learning should know certain essentia conditions without which they cannot achieve their goal.

First, do not attempt to do so for the sake of profi You should love learning for its own sake and strive for i If you value knowledge as a supreme blessing, each nev truth you uncover will bring peace and satisfaction to you soul. Memorise well what is new to you, and you will fee the desire for new quests, and a love of knowledge will b born in your heart. Then your memory will absorb what ever you have seen and heard.

But if you have another purpose in mind, seek know ledge only with the aim of getting rich, your attitude t learning will be the same as that of a woman to her step son. If your soul and your mind are well intentione towards learning, it will be benevolent in turn—it will sur render to you readily. But it will show half-hearted benev olence to a half-hearted person.

Second, study with clear and noble aims, not t acquire learning so as to be able to argue with other peo ple. Now, arguments within reason help to strengthen one' convictions, but, excessive zeal for them can only spoil

an. For lovers of wrangling will launch into disputes not
r the sake of ascertaining the truth but rather to show off
eir knowledge and get the upper hand of other people.
uch arguments breed envy, add not a whit of humanity,
nd do not serve scholarship—on the contrary, they simply
nfuse people. This is the vain occupation of trouble-
akers. He who leads hundreds astray from the right path
not worth the little finger of one who has brought just
ne man back to the path of truth.

True, disputation is one of the paths to knowledge, but
person who gives himself entirely to this runs the risk of
ecoming conceited and arrogant, an envious gossip. Such
person will be not averse to slander, backbiting and vitu-
eration, which only lowers human dignity.

Third, if you have succeeded in your pursuit of a truth,
not turn back from it even on pain of death. But if you
e not convinced of your knowledge, do not imagine that
meone else will appreciate it. If you do not value your
vn knowledge, how can you expect recognition from
ter strangers?

Fourth, there are two tool that aid the acquisition of
owledge. One is mulakhaza [the subtle art of polemics]
d the other, mukhafaza [firmness in defence of one's
ews]. It is necessary to strive constantly to perfect these,
r without them it is impossible to reinforce and develop
ur knowledge.

Fifth, I spoke previously of four harmful attitudes of
nd, and among these we named careless sloth or idle-
ss. My soul! I enjoin you, to beware of this evil! It is per-

nicious both for God and for man, both for reason and fo
honour. It is the arch enemy of everything! But there is n
place for this evil where conscience resides.

Sixth, human character is a vessel containing intell
gence and knowledge. Develop your character therefore
By indulging in envy and frivolity, by allowing yourself t
be influenced by the words of others and momentary pa
sions, you may forfeit your strength of character. Learnin
will be of no avail if the vessel that receives your knov
ledge is not sound.

To attain your goal and be faithful to your duty, yo
should foster constancy of purpose, determination an
strong will, for these help preserve the sobriety of your rea
son and the purity of your conscience.

Everything should serve the cause of reason and hon
our.

Word Thirty-Three

If you want to be rich, learn a trade. Wealth diminishes with time, but a skill does not. He who sells the fruits of his labour without trying to deceive is considered saintly by the people. Yet those on whom God has bestowed some skill will not avoid certain vices either.

First of all, they may not endeavour to improve their skill by seeking to learn from better artisans. Content with what little proficiency they have, such people indulge in indolence.

Second, one must spare no effort in one's work. But here are those who, having acquired a few livestock, imagine themselves to be rich, and become lazy, boastful and careless in their work.

Third, should someone approach him with the request, 'You are a capable man and a generous one—it won't cost much to you to do this or that for me,' he will swell with pride and think he has become an important fellow whom other people approach for help. Succumbing to flattery and hubris, he wastes his valuable time and lets a sly flatterer take advantage of him.

Fourth, such people are eager to make friends of any

kind. If some swindler presents them with a trinket, they will promise their help and feel glad someone needs their friendship. That's where their gullibility and poor knowledge of life come to light. Ready to trust a lying tongue and rejoicing at the salutations of a false friend, they will do their best to help him get what he allegedly lacks; they will share their goods with him and forget about their own needs, their concerns and obligations; if need be, they will run about and borrow right and left. Trying to please others, they will waste their time and run up debts, they will get involved in quarrels because of these debts, they will lose face, and live in want and disgrace.

Why does all this happen? Because those inclined to deceive others often themselves fall prey to deception.

Word Thirty-Four

Everyone knows that humans are mortal, that death omes not only for the aged and that, having taken some-ne away, will never give him back. The Kazakh is aware f this, but not through deep reflection

The Kazakhs say they believe in a God who calls verybody to account when they die; He requites good ith good and punishes those who do evil. They believe at His rewards and punishments differ from those on arth: His rewards are infinite in their generosity, and the enalties He metes out are immensely harsh. But I do not ust their words, for they do not hold their faith sincerely nd consciously. If they truly believed what they say, they ould act according to their faith and would not know sor-w. Is it possible to convince such people of some other ings if they are feeble in their faith even in regard to ese truths? How to correct their ways? Can they be called ue Muslims?

He who seeks to avoid torments in this world and the ext should remember one thing: there cannot be two joys, vo passions, two doubts and two sorrows in one's heart multaneously. This is impossible. He who places earthly

joys and sorrows above the cares and joys of the world to come is not a Muslim.

Now judge for yourselves what kind of a Muslim the Kazakh is. If he came upon two things, one designed for life eternal beyond the grave and the other for this life, and had to choose between the two, the Kazakh would certainly opt for the latter, hoping to get the former on another occasion, and believing that in any case Allah, in His magnanimity, will forgive him for making the wrong choice. Before the judgement of death, however, this man will swear that he has never exchanged worldly pleasures for the joys of life eternal. How can you trust him after that?

Man should be a friend to man. For everything in this life—birth, upbringing, satisfaction, hunger, sorrow and grief, the form of his body, the way in which he comes into this world and departs it—are common to all. In the other world, too, the same things await us all: death, burial, decay of the flesh and judgement. How do you know whether you will live another five days or not? All people are each other's guests; man himself is a guest in this life. Is it good, then, to speak maliciously and quarrel because of wealth, envy another's happiness and give offence for mere trifles?

Reverencing man but not God, praying not for one's own labour to be blessed but for the good things of life to be wrested from others—should one turn to Allah with such a request? Will the Creator humiliate and deprive one person for the sake of another?

To have no sound reason, no education and be unable

to put two words together, obstinately insisting on one's own way and trying to compete with the sage—is this worthy of the name of man?

Is this really a man?

Word Thirty-Five

Calling to His Judgement the Hadjis, Sufis, Mullahs, Jomarts and Sayyids, the Most High will demand much of them. He will set aside those among them who, during their earthly span, served and did good works only to earn respect and the good things of life. He will separate them from those who desired only to serve and please Allah.

To those who praised Him out of selfish interest He will say: 'During your earthly life you served me only for the sake of being addressed with deference. But this will no longer be so. Your happy life has come to an end, and so has your power over people. You will not be honoured here, but called to account for all you have done. You will answer for all this. I granted you life and bestowed wealth upon you, but you used all that to your own benefit; you have deceived people under the guise of concern for the other world.'

But to those who served Him truly, the Most High will say: 'By all your life and all your deeds you have endeavoured to please me. I am content with you. A place of honour has been made ready for you, so welcome! Perhaps you will meet friends whom you have helped or those who have supported you by their good intentions. So rejoice!'

Word Thirty-Six

In the words of Our Prophet, may Allah bless his name, recorded in the Hadith:'He who is without shame is also without faith.' Similarly, our folk saying declares: 'He who has shame also has iman.' It is obvious therefore: shame is an integral part of iman. But what is shame?

There is a shame born of ignorance. It is akin to the timidity of a child who is shy of uttering a word or approaching a stranger even if it has done no mischief. He who is guiltless before the Shariah and his own conscience but is ashamed of what he should not be ashamed displays a sure sign of stupidity and low breeding.

But true shame is that felt by a person who commits an action contrary to the Shariah laws, human conscience and human dignity. Such shame is of two kinds.

One is when you are ashamed not of yourself but of another man's misdeeds. You are ashamed because you feel for the wrongdoer, and you think, 'Heavens! What has happened to this man? How could he commit such an unworthy act?' And you blush for him.

The other kind of shame comes from your own wrongdoing before the Shariah, before your own con-

science and humanity, which you may have committed in error or inadvertently. Perhaps no one except yourself is aware of your fault, but your mind and your being are in anguish and punish you. You worry, you are unable to look others in the eye, and you suffer.

People capable of feeling such kind of shame lose their appetite, cannot sleep, and in despair may even commit suicide. Shame is a feeling of human dignity that compels a man to admit his guilt to himself and mete out his own punishment. At such times you are incapable of thinking and at a loss for words. You have not time enough to wipe away the tears as they pour down. You feel like a snivelling cur. Unable to meet other people's gaze, you are blind to everything around you. The person who knows about such torments but, instead of magnanimously forgiving the offender, only makes his suffering worse is lacking in humanity and mercy.

The people I see around me nowadays are ashamed of nothing and incapable of blushing. 'I've admitted my fault, what else do you expect me to do?' they say. Or they make excuses: 'Yes, I've behaved badly, but don't you ever do the same?' Or they may argue: 'Such-and-such people have done this or that, but they're still walking the earth as if nothing happened. Compared to them, I've done nothing wrong. Besides, I had good reason to act like that.' Instead of being ashamed of their action, such people set out to whitewash themselves.

What shall we call such people: shame-faced or shameless? The Hadith and the words of the sages do not

llow us to call them shame-faced.

Now, have such people iman or have they not?

Word Thirty-Seven

1. Judge a man's qualities by the intentions of his action and not by its outcome.

2. However good a thought, it is tarnished by passing through human lips.

3. You may find solace by saying wise words to a conceited fool but, more often than not, they vanish into thin air.

4. Render good to a wise man; a fool will only be spoilt by it.

5. A father's son is an enemy to other people. But a son of mankind is your dear brother.

6. A good man may ask much, but will be content with little; a despicable one will ask much, but will be dissatisfied even if he gets more than he asked for.

7. He who works for his own benefit alone is like an animal that grazes to fill its own stomach; but he who works to fulfil his human duty, the Most High will distinguish by His love.

8. Who poisoned Socrates, burnt Joan of Arc, and crucified Jesus? Who buried our Prophet in the carcass of a camel? The masses, the multitude! The multitude is devoid of reason. Seek to direct in onto the path of truth.

9. Man is a child of his time. If he is bad, his contemporaries are to blame.

10. Had I the power, I would cut out the tongue of anyone who asserts that man is incorrigible.

11. To be left alone is like dying. The lonely person suffers misfortunes of every kind. The world knows many a vicious thing, but also pleasures and joys. Who will endure the former in dignity? And who will not be corrupted by the latter?

12. Who among us has not known trouble? Only the weak lose hope. Nothing in this world is immutable, and misfortune cannot last for ever. Does not the bountiful and blossoming spring follow the harsh winter?

13. He who keeps silent in his anger contains his fury within himself. He who spits abuse is either a braggart or a coward.

14. Success and good luck make a man drunk. Only one in a thousand can keep cool and reasonable.

15. If you want your labours to be successful, start the job in hand wisely.

16. High office is like a high cliff. The slow snake will crawl up it and the hawk will swoop down on it. Ill-wishers start praising those who have not yet reached the top, and the latter, being credulous, will rejoice at such praise.

17. The world is an ocean, time is a breath of wind, early waves are elder brothers, and late waves are younger brothers. Generation succeeds generation, even though things seems immutable in their quietude.

18. A common man renowned for his cleverness is

greater than a king who has been raised up by good for tune. A youth who sells his handiwork is worthier than a old man selling his beard.

19. A beggar with a full belly is the devil incarnate; lazy Sufi is nothing but a hypocrite.

20. A false friend is like a shadow: when the sun shines on you, you can't get rid of him, but when clouds gather over you, he is nowhere to be seen.

21. Be frank with those without friends; keep on good terms with those who have many. Beware of the careless man; be a shield to the destitute.

22. There is no use of anger without power, love without fidelity and a teacher without pupils.

23. While you are seeking happiness, everybody wishes you well; but once you have attained it, your only well-wisher is yourself.

Word Thirty-Eight

My dear children, the solace of my heart! I have just ritten a few words on human actions, and I bequeath hat I have written to you as a momento. Read carefully id try to understand the meaning of these words, and your earts will be full of love. Now, human love is inseparable om human reason, intelligence and loving kindness. The urce of these virtues are the perfections that are stowed on man from his birth: sound health and a beauful appearance; the rest depends on the nobility of soul of e's father and mother, on wise mentors and kind friends. ve engenders aspiration and understanding, while reason, intelligence and loving kindness kindle an interest in arning.

A child does not aspire to learning of his own free ll. He has to be persuaded through coercion or inducement until he acquires a thirst for knowledge. A child seeking knowledge may be considered a true human being, and u may hope that he will later strive to know God, to derstand his own self and the world around him, that he ll do well, but not at the expense of his honour, and will un evil. Otherwise he will be doomed to live in igno-

rance or, at best, acquire only superficial knowledge. It
disgraceful that many parents, having raised their childre
badly, then leave them to the care of mullahs; but suc
learning will come to no avail. Children spoilt from infa
cy will show no interest in learning and religion, or respe
for their tutors. They will never grow up to become worth
men, righteous mullahs and true Muslims. The most diff
cult thing is to instil humanity, loving kindness, in ther
For Allah is the way of truth, and sincerity and truthfulne
are the enemies of evil. Will a friend accept an invitatio
sent through an adversary? Truth cannot be attained unle
the soul has a love of it. Human knowledge is gained b
means of love of truth, through a thirst to discover th
nature and essence of things for one's self. This is not, o
course divine omniscience: human curiosity and a strivin
for knowledge give learning only commensurate wit
man's reason.

But, above all, one should come to love Allah. It
known that Knowledge is one of the attributes of the Mo
High, and therefore a love of Knowledge is a sign o
humanity and integrity. Those who pursue it for gain an
for base, selfish aims can never attain the heights o
Knowledge. Let wealth, general respect and fame find
man of their own accord, only then will they becomes wo
thy ornaments of his person. But undue regard for ther
can only lower a man.

If you are possessed by love of truth and a desire fo
learning, listen attentively and be diligent. Those who pro
fess Islam should know wherein the truth of the iman lie

r faith is not simply blind worship. Suppose we have ome to believe in God, that the wisdom of the Qur'an xpresses His will, and that Mohammad Mustafa, blessed e his name, is His messenger. What is to be gained by ch faith? Do you believe in God for His sake or for your vn salvation? Allah is great, and He will not suffer from our lack of faith. If you say that your faith is necessary for our own self—good, it means that you believe indeed. ut if your faith is for the sake of faith alone, you will gain othing from it. Your faith will prove truly righteous and ing you good only if you desire this. You should know by nat efforts conscious, reasonable faith is achieved...

You say you believe in God, in his attributes and mes. Then you should know His names, you should derstand the greatness of each of His eight attributes, ce you call yourself a Muslim and consider yourself a rvant of the Most High, and try to subordinate your oughts and designs to His divine will. Do not say in your norance that you cannot liken yourself to God. Indeed, e creations of the Most High cannot be exactly repro-ced, but you can follow in His paths in all your deeds. ese are the most radiant attributes of Allah: Life, nowledge, Power, Will, Sight, Hearing, Word or Speech d Creation.

The Creator has endowed man with these eight attrib-es of Himself, though not in the same absolute perfection.

Now, can we call ourselves Muslims if we do not ploy the bestowed attributes, puny though they be, cording to their design and to please the Most High? We

should know how to act in accordance with the eig
supreme attributes of Allah, for Allah's nature is such th
it does not need any description on our part; however, o
mind ought to have a clear idea of God in the eight afor
mentioned attributes. Otherwise, we can have no conce
tion of the Most High. But since we know of Allah on
what He manifests to us, none of us can know Him in H
completeness. Even the wisest among the wise will nev
understand the inner meaning of His deeds, let alone th
essence of His nature. Allah is almighty, but our powe
are finite. It is impossible to measure the infinite with th
finite. Eager to fix the idea of Him in our minds, we repea
'There is no god but Allah, Allah is one and unique.' Y
the very notions of 'is' and 'one' cannot express th
essence of Allah, which is beyond human understandin
for no phenomenon in real life cannot escape the measu
'one'. This measure likewise applies to the entire univers
within Allah's dominion, as revealed in the Hol
Scriptures, where mention is made of His eight invariab
attributes and ninety-nine Beautiful Names expressing H
inimitable image and His deeds.

But here I would wish to dwell on only four of Allah
attributes; the first two are Knowledge and Power, whil
the other ones are an integral whole augmenting and sup
plementing the substance of these two. And I would like t
single out yet another of the divine attributes—Life.

We say: 'There is no god but Allah, Allah is one an
unique.' We perceive and apprehend Him as the Power o
Knowledge. But let us ponder, whether the notions 'is

ne', 'power' and 'knowledge' are really potent. There nnot be any doubt that the power of knowledge is a real rce: where there is Life, there is Will. But where nowledge is, Will is likewise inevitable. By itself nowledge will not give anything. Everything on earth is t in motion by the omnipotence of the Almighty. One of e intrinsic properties of Will is the Word, that is, Speech. an the Word dispense with written letters and the voice? nly Allah's word is without letters and without voice. But nce there is the need to speak, there must be the ability to ar what is said and see what is visible. Allah does not ar and see not like us, with ears and eyes; this faculty to e and to hear without eyes and ears is an overwhelming lvantage, it is the Power of Knowledge.

Another attribute of Allah is Creation, which means bstantiation. If we consider that Creation, as one of llah's attributes, persists in the act of substantiation with- t end and does not liberate itself from it in its own right, do Knowledge and Power, but is subordinate, obedient to bstantiation, then we shall have to admit the impotence d submission of Creation. Yet subservience is not proper Allah. Creation is the tool of Power. It follows hence that nowledge and Power bring together all the eight attribut- of Allah. Knowledge is boundless and perfect. Power is nnipotent and infallible. A craftsman is judged by his orks. It is not given to any mortal to comprehend what lossal labour and what omnipotent force have created and ited everything that we behold and perceive.

If reason is the master of man, and strength serves him

in all of his actions, does it not follow that the same qua
ties serve Allah as well? The notions of Knowledge an
Power ought to be perceived conjoined as Omniscie
Power, for otherwise one will lead the other, which is al
is contrary to Allah's teachings.

But, then, can it be that the eight attributes of Allah c
not merge into a single image but are different and ind
pendent entities? All these properties issue from on
Creator and, taken together, they personify the integral an
inimitable image of Allah. We shall fall into error b
ascribing some premeditation to their union and believin
it to be forged for the express purpose of forming a
almighty image.

Man's strength resides in his reason and in his know
ledge. The power of the Most High is expressed i
Knowledge and in Compassion and Mercy. Althoug
Mercy and Compassion are not mentioned amongst Hi
eight attributes, they are present in His names: Mos
Gracious, Merciful, Compassionate, All-Merciful an
Forgiving, Loving, Protecting, Condescending, Bene
ficent... These names of Allah bear out my arguments. Th
logic of my reasoning is likewise confirmed by the won
drous harmony of the created universe. Indeed, everythin
is designed for mutual benefit. Inanimate bodies feel n
pain and serve as food for animate creatures; animals sus
tain the life of intelligent beings, humankind; the beasts ar
exempt from the Last Judgement, while man is endowe
with reason and has dominion over everything upon th
earth. That God has created man capable of answering fo

s deeds on the Day of Judgement bear witness to His jus-
ce and love for mankind. He has created man not after the
nage of worms, birds of the air or other living creatures,
ut put man on two legs, He has placed man's head high so
to enable him to behold the surrounding world, and not
t him crawl on all fours, as the beasts do, to get his food;
od endowed man with two arms and two hands in the ser-
ce of the head; He gave him a nose to enjoy fragrant
ents; He provided him with eyes so as to see and behold,
elids to protect the eyes,

lashes to stop the eyelids rubbing together, and eye-
ows to stop the sweat trickling down from the forehead;
e tongue has been given to allow humankind to commu-
cate, understand one another and work together. Does
is not testify to God's love for man? But if someone loves
ou, are you not obliged to reply in kind?

Just stop to think: the Sun sucks up moisture and turns
into the clouds that let fall the life-giving rain for seeds,
asses and flowers which gladden the human eye and
art; all kinds of fruit and sugar cane ripen to sustain life
on the earth; the rivers that flow into seas and lakes
ench the thirst of birds and beasts and serve as the home
fish. The Earth is the giver of bread, cotton, hemp, fruit
d berries; its bowels contain mineral wealth; birds pro-
de man with down, eggs and meat; livestock give milk,
ool and hide. The waters yield fish, the fish—caviar, the
es—honey and wax, the silkworms—silk. Nobody in the
orld can say of these riches, 'This is all mine!' All is
eant for the good of man. Factories and machines, made

by immense labour, are likewise intended to benefit man

Is that not proof of the love of the Most High for man Is it not man's duty to requite love with love?

To keep humankind from exterminating animal species out of sheer greed and thus harming succeeding generations, Allah made the selfsame human greed and cupidity serve the preservation of animals. Animals rely on their strength and speed, finding refuge in deep waters, high up in rocky mountains, in the depths of forests; every living being has the urge to multiply, is endowed with the instinct of self-preservation and of rearing its young. It is in the scheme of things that the animals should not become man's equal but should provide man with nourishment. All that is the manifestation of divine kindness and justice to us.

We will not stop to think that kindness and justice are the commandments of the Shariah. Considering ourselves Muslims and faithful to Allah, do we follow His commandments without fail? Do we need other proof than these testimonies, bright as the heavenly bodies, of Allah's care and concern for man?

We like to see the good deeds of other people. But we won't burden ourselves with too much concern for our neighbour. Is this not sinful?

He who permits evil and does not oppose it cannot be regarded as a true Muslim. At best, he is a half-hearted Muslim.

Where is the right way that the Most High has indicated? Many do not know it. I have never seen a Muslim who has absorbed the words of the Prophet: 'Think of the

eeds of Allah' or followed the words of the prayer: 'Love llah, and He will love you.'

'Do good unto people, for Allah loves those who do ood.'

'Believers perform good deeds, and their place is in aradise.'

The Qur'an abounds in such verses, yet none of us ill look deeply into their meaning; we lack both the will nd sufficient knowledge to comprehend these truths.

'There are people who believe in Allah, who deem it eir sacred duty to do good to others, for they know that llah does not love those of ill will.' Proof of this are these ords of the Prophet, may Allah bless him:

'He who is unjust, has no conscience. He who is with- ut conscience is also without faith.'

Hence we see that faith cannot come by itself: it is orn of justice and good will. But justice and virtues are ot to be gained by prayer and blind adoration alone. I ink no proof is needed here: you see Muslims zealous in eir prayers and rigorous in their fasting, but this is not nough.

Justice is the mother of all good deeds. Conscience nd honour come from justice. A just man will surely stop think, and he will ask himself, 'Why do I approve of the ood deeds of others but do not hasten to share in them?' oes this not indicate his justice and honesty? Is this not e beginning of good works? But why, in his concern for ther people, does he not show the same concern for the reator?

The desire to do good is born of the ability to be con tent with little. Do not lose your sense of justice and neve tire of doing good. There can be neither faith nor humani ty, loving kindness, without justice. As Allayar Sufi teach es us, one sin begets a hundred others.

We conceive of the Most High in our mind as th Omniscient, All-Merciful and Just. If signs of Knowledge Compassion and Justice are present in you, this means tha you seek learning, you are a true Muslim and are endowe with great humanity. It is common knowledge that zhauan mart [nobility of soul] embodies three virtues: truthfulness good intent and sound reason. Truthfulness personifie Justice, good intent—Compassion and Mercy, and Reason as we know, is one of the names of Knowledge. These qualities, albeit in small measure, are proper to man, and i is his duty to strive to perfect them, to use them for good and to remember and cherish them in his heart. This can only be achieved with sincere desire and tireless effort The Prophet possesses the above three qualities, and so do the saints, savants and true Muslims; these qualities are intended for the service of the Most High, they were preached by the Prophet and espoused with love by the saints. Yet the saints' love is concerned only about life eternal beyond the grave. They have either forgotten about earthly joys or never paid any attention to them

The savants, however, think of and care about life in this world. The judgements of the saints and the learned men are contradictory, though they are not far apart in their views, and both support Allah's teachings. But should not

ıy argument end to mutual satisfaction?

Like human nature, Knowledge and Reason brook no olence against them, they are averse to duplicity, they ach us to be kind, honest and good in our deeds, that is to y, they teach us Compassion.

But I think that both the saints and the savants seek tisfaction in dispute just to gratify their vanity.

Had humankind chosen the path of tarikat, the path dicated by the saints, the world would have fallen into solation and decay. Who would have then grazed the vestock, who would have repulsed the enemy, who would ıve made clothes, and who would have sown wheat and ttracted the riches from the bowels of the earth?

In renouncing the good things granted unto us by the ost High, do we not run the risk of being discourteous. ıreasonable and ungrateful, and so commit a grievous sin?

Those who have chosen this way may be doomed to sappear, or they may become an easy prey for unbeliev-s, and the weakest among them will abandon their path disgrace.

If this path is predestined for only half of the Muslims, e question arises: is there such a thing as a truth that plies to only half? Truth ought to be the same for each d everyone. Can there be a selective truth? Or a selective stice? In this is so, there can be no life for the people at . For life is the supreme and ultimate truth. There can be perfection without life.

Yet not all the saints have disdained the good things of is world. We know that three close adherents of the

Prophet—Hazret Gusman, Gabdurahman ibn Gauf a
Sahid ibn Abdukas—were renowned for their wealth.

We may explain the strict abstinence of the saints
their lack of confidence in their strength, by their fear
being tempted by earthly joys, which would undoubted
have weakened their faith. Or perhaps this self-deni
comes from their desire to turn people from cupidity
example, in the hope that common people, seeing the
humility, would abandon evil passions and selfish aim
and would choose the path of love and charity? If all th
is undertaken solely out of selfless love for people, the
sacrifices are not justified, this path is wrong and dange
ous. For much more is needed. Only people wholly com
mitted to their faith, who have gained the highest know
ledge, who have great spiritual strength, and posses
exceptional courage and firmness will see the light of truth
It is next to impossible to find all these qualities in a on
person; or their putative possessor may turn out to be a
arch charlatan and impostor.

The desire to distinguish oneself and raise onese
above all others spoils human nature. An ignorant ma
who says he has embarked on the path of tarikat acknowl
edges thereby his own immorality.

The thinker and the savant are essentially the same
but they differ in their paths of cognition. The outwar
knowledge, recognised by the world, is delivered to us i
the form of precepts. Teachers who have succeeded best i
their precepts are called savants.

Nothing is created without a reason. It may be that th

vants are possessed by the yearning to fathom the mysries of Allah's might, which is not prohibited to anyone; do they pursue learning out of an infinite love of Allah imself? But is it appropriate to speak of such love if it is ot given to man to know Allah?

Only a love born of clear understanding, infinite faith d a sense of gratitude to Allah for creating human beings ith much love and endowing them in turn with the capacy to love and feel pity—only this can be called the true ve for the Most High.

Only those who seek to know Allah according to their ghts and who look for the first cause of all phenomena d objects are worthy of the savant's name. They seek uth, justice and good in the interests of humankind, for em there is no other joy or satisfaction in life but their ork. Had there been no such thinkers pursuing the right th, the whole world would have gone to rack and ruin. hese true savants are the backbone of all that is wrought human hand; their minds set in order everything that is earth. Their activities are directed towards well-being in is life; for, as it is said, earthly life is a field tilled for the e hereafter.

Not every savant is a sage, but every sage is a savant.

The traditional faith is gained with the help of prepts from scholarly minds, but it is by enlightenment from e sage that it is transmuted into the true faith. This is hieved by the wise men who have understood the preme meaning of Islam. The scholars of worldly knowdge, however, do not know the principles of religion,

even though they may be in search of truth and may hav
succeeded in unravelling the enigmas of the universe an
of human existence for themselves. Of the seven condi
tions of the Shariah they are capable only of recognisin
Allah, but they cannot tell Allah's friends from His ene
mies. Although such scholars cannot be our spiritual shep
herds, they deserve our gratitude: for, as the Prophet say
in the Hadith, those who do good to others are considere
the best of men.

Such men know neither sleep nor repose nor diver
sions; they persevere in a tireless quest for discoveries tha
might be useful to humankind. They have given man elec
tricity, the power of lightning, they have learnt to commu
nicate with one another over immense distances, they hav
compelled fire and water to perform colossal work tha
even thousands of men cannot do. They improve th
human mind, they teach us to distinguish good from evil
and we are certainly indebted to them for many things.

The present-day mullahs are against learned men, a
fact that attests either to the ignorance of the clergy or t
their bad intentions; for it is said: man by his very nature i
inclined to sin. Many of their pupils, having learnt by hear
a few prayers in Arabic or in Persian, consider themselve
capable of taking part in disputes and are proud of this
instead of good, they do people harm, and lead them astray
by their loud-mouthed appeals and empty boasting. Some
of them do harm not with malicious intent but by obeying
their natural instinct. It is pleasant to see a few who have
heeded wise counsels return to the fold of their conscience

ut can you call someone who obstructs the truth a man of onscience? Conceit, let alone unfounded conceit, spoils an. If truth be still called truth, and the truth is Allah, one ught not to oppose it, but try to understand it and reason rrectly. For delusion carries the danger of becoming ienated from religion.

When the great Prophet, blessed be his name, said, There will come a day equal in length to a year,' the arned ulemas enquired, 'How many prayers will there be n that day?' And they received the reply, 'The learned en of that time will know'. Did not the Prophet imply by ese words that the canons of religion would change and ke new forms with time?

Nowadays, the methods of teaching at the madrasah e hopelessly out of date, and have proved to be not only seless but even harmful. Accordingly, new schools have een opened in Turkey where, along with divinity, military nd other sciences are taught. Our youth wastes too many ears in empty memorising at the madrasah and come out norant, unreasonable and incapable of working, who will ve only by fraud and deception. The teachings of mullahs o nothing but harm.

The beauty of the created universe ennobles the uman mind. It may happen that man, finding himself in isery and want, will lose his human form and turn into an nimal. To have no desire to understand world science and cholarship is a sign of ignorance condemned in the ur'an as well.

There is a world of difference between the wealth laid

up in order to become high and mighty and the wealt accumulated for the sake of helping the needy and not t be dependent on others.

We should not seek to gain knowledge for the sake o profit. On the contrary, we should use wealth to acquir knowledge. Art is an inexhaustible treasure, and there i nothing more noble than to learn it. Knowledge ought t serve justice and conform to the demands of the divine law Man must not only admire the good deeds of others, bu perform good deeds himself.

Speaking of the mullahs, I should like to warn yo against the ishans in particular. Their teachings are fals and dangerous. Many of them are ignoramuses who do no know the real laws of the Shariah but chose the way of ser vice nonetheless. They attempt to teach others in spite o the paucity of their own knowledge; the doctrines of thes seducers of mankind are harmful even for the pseudo-reli gions. They find support among fools and their words ar false; the signs of their learning are rosary beads, a turba and nothing else!

You should know, my children, that the path of th Most High is infinite, and it is given to no one to travers it to the end. He who is resolved to follow this path is con sidered a true Muslim. But if your aim is to acquire wealth in your narrowness of mind you do not follow the path o God. Why this incomprehensible greed and covetousnes for the riches of the entire world? If you intend to shar with people your money, livestock, learning and other goo things you have, you are on the path of the Most High, th

nly path without end. Those who have chosen it are con-idered His true servants, they can cherish the hope of pproaching God. What hope can there be on another path?

With some people their abilities and intentions are irected towards improving their appearance, they pay too nuch attention to their clothes and the way they walk, con-idering this to be a laudable occupation. Such persons are ager to show off, as if they were in the market place, and hey arouse envy amongst fools whose wits are only in heir eyes. Looking at them, some are consumed by jeal-usy, while others wear themselves out trying to copy hem. Who stands to gain from this? How much effort has een expended just to impress others with their appear-nce? But man's merits lie not in his appearance, but in the urity of his mind, in his spiritual essence, for it is by this hat Allah distinguishes amongst us. Will these devotees of he looking-glass add so much as one jot to their wits? The uman mind is improved by the infinite, inexhaustible love f good.

By His consummate art Allah created the universe and nan, so that he could grow and procreate. It is a sacred uty of each of us to increase the number of our friends. his depends on our good will and warmth of heart owards other people, something that must evoke a esponse in kind. At least do not wish ill to others, do not y to put ourselves above them by your words or deeds.

But one may elevate oneself spiritually, and this can e done in diverse ways.

First, the ability to preserve human dignity even at the

time of great trials ennobles man.

Second, self-praise and extolling your good points cai do you only harm.

Third, maliciousness, injuring the self-esteem of oth ers and causing them humiliation breed animosity in turn

Boasting, which is a frequent consequence of th desire to show off, arouses envy, and one envy engender another.

The absence of these vices brings peace to the huma soul, and in the soul at peace with itself aspiration is born

There are three things that can cause disgrace to th whole of humankind, things you ought to avoid, and these are ignorance, sloth and wickedness.

Ignorance means lack of knowledge, in the absence o which nothing can be achieved; lack of learning make man no better than the beasts.

Sloth is the worst enemy of the arts; mediocrity, lac of will power, shamelessness and poverty—all these ar born of laziness.

Wickedness is the enemy of humankind: by doing evi to others, man alienates himself from his own kind an becomes like a wild beast.

The antidote to these vices is the love of man, th desire for general well-being, firmness of spirit, justice an deep and broad knowledge. Direct all of your knowledg in the way indicated by Allah. As He spared no effort i creating the harmonious and perfect world, you, too should carry out your work with as much industry an good intent. Whatever Allah has created has its purpose

ne fruits of your labour should always serve people's ood, otherwise any work will be useless, and your faith ill be in vain.

It is common knowledge that Allah's creations have ot been wrought without difficulties, and nothing has een made without a purpose. Everything has its aim and s reason. A man yearning for knowledge ought to remember that work should be done for a purpose.

The Prophet, may Allah bless his name, has left us ese words: 'Before undertaking anything, you should ave a purpose and an aspiration.'

Now, you have decided to make your ablutions, to say our prayers and observe the fasts henceforth. Good, but ill it not be sinful to concern yourselves only with outard appearances in observing the rites? If your soul is ure, observation of the holy rites will reflect your spiritul life, and outward orderliness will but adorn and ennoble our faith. Is it not for this reason that the wise men have aid that there is but one faith, that it is hallowed by great atience, and that without your restraint it tarnishes or may ven be doomed to perdition. This has been said lest the norant, concerned about outward rites alone, should forget about the main goal: faith.

I have reason to believe that the ignorant are coninced it is enough to perform the obligatory rites to be onsidered Muslims. But this is not so, for the rites are nly the guardians of faith. But what good is a guard who st wakes people up but is not concerned about the safety nd preservation of a precious object he is in charge of?

What shall become of faith without constant vigilance? Preserving the treasure in your custody pure and intact—is that not the real purpose?

You who are blind to the deeper meaning of ritual signs and acts, take heed! Their most essential part is namaz. But before saying your prayers, you must make your ablutions. These are performed after you have discharged the waste matter from your body. Remember that. The ceremony of ablution must end by passing your wet hands over your feet—some of these ritual acts are of symbolic significance.

After freeing your body from waste matter, you perform your ablutions by washing the parts of your body invisible to the eyes of others. This is surely of no interest at all to strangers; but by these actions you show people that your soul is pure, and that you want your outward appearance to accord with your inner condition. In the state of complete purification and peace of mind, you proceed to your namaz.

Namaz means prayers and incantations.

The light touch of your wet fingers on your neck and feet means that you have purified yourself.

Beginning your prayer, touch your ears with your fingers, to show that you dare not raise your hands higher than that before Allah. This movement attests to your belief: There is no God but Allah! It attests to your fervent supplication unto Him: 'Do not let me sink into worldly vanity, stretch out a helping hand!'

Your bowed head and arms folded on your breast indi-

ate that you stand not just like a slave before a master, not ike a common man before a king, but like one who cknowledges himself to be a weak, humble creature and ommits himself to the justice and omnipotence of the nost wise Allah.

The face turned toward the qiblah signifies worship- ing the place of the supposed visitation of the Most High, even though we know that there is no place on earth wor- hy of His sojourn. This is in the hope that our prayers will each the ear of the Most High.

Saying your prayers, begin with the Fatihah. This is a ong prayer rich in meaning.

Genuflections made with the hands resting on the nees are a sign that the Muslim supplicant has appeared efore Allah's face.

The first obeisance, touching the ground with the fore- ead, signifies that man comes from the dust of the earth, nd the second—that unto dust he shall return. Turning our face to heaven is a sign of the hope and fervent sup- lication for resurrection after death.

End your prayers in yet another prostration and utter words of salutation to the Most High and His Prophet, may Allah bless his name, and wish peace, unity and prosperi- y to all Muslims!

Now, what have we learnt from this Word?

Word Thirty-Nine

Yes, our forefathers were certainly inferior to the present generation in learning, civility, neatness and tidiness. Yet they possessed two merits which we have not.

Overcoming, little by little, the shortcomings that we inherited from our forefathers, we have lost those merits. Had we possessed determination in our character and done our utmost to safeguard the old virtues while acquiring new qualities, we might have been the equal of other nations. But since we lack resolve and force of character, we have let the newly acquired qualities foster demonic, rather than human, properties in us. This is one of the main reasons why we have forfeited our national virtues.

What character traits do I have in mind? In olden times there used to be people known as yel-basy and top-basy, who judged disputes and governed the life of the community. The common people somehow managed to look after themselves. They were not accustomed to dispute the rulings of the yel-basy and top-basy, or run from one to another of these dignitaries with complaints. We say: 'Take a stick if it fits your hand, and then make it into a bat.' Or: 'When everyone is his own judge, people can-

not live together even in a boundless land; when a community has a chief, no one gets burnt even in a fire.' Acknowledging this truth, people would bring their offerings to the holy spirits and, having uttered their prayers, would hand the reins of government to one they had all elected, thenceforth supporting him in all his undertakings, even to the extent of hushing up his faults and praising his merits. They showed due respect for him, they heeded his words and obeyed him without fail; then even influential men did not transgress the bounds of reason. How could they fail to care for people when all were brothers and wealth was held in common?

And another point: our people treasured their unity as the holy of holies. If someone called on others for help, invoking the names of the forefathers, everyone would rush in, forgetting all offences and quarrels, to lend a hand, ready to make concessions and sacrifices. As people used to say:

'He who cannot forgive the fault of his neighbour will be offended by a stranger.'

'Brothers may quarrel, but not forswear each other.'

'If six men are in conflict, they lose whatever they have in their hands; but if four are in accord, heavenly grace will descend upon them.'

'He who seeks the right path will find treasure, but he who seeks quarrels will find woe.'

Where is that noble community spirit and concern for honour?

These were safeguarded by staunchness, good con-

science and valour. We have them no longer.

Among people today, friendship has nothing to do with friendliness; it is but breach of trust and perfidy.

Enmity stems not from the love of truth, but from our inability to live in peace.

Word Forty

Now, this is what I would like to ask you, honoured men.

How come that we speak no ill of the dead but find no worthy people among the living?

Why do old folks live in peace with the young but constantly quarrel among themselves, even though their contemporaries grow fewer with every passing day?

No sooner does someone happens to leave for foreign parts than everybody starts loving him like a brother. But when he comes back, we compel him to flee from us. Why?

Why is it that seeing some good man from another tribe, people will put themselves out on his behalf and praise his qualities, while among their own kin they will not notice those who surpass the stranger in wisdom and nobility?

When in an alien land, we praise our aul to the skies; on our return, we have nothing but praise for the foreign village. How come?

Why do parents show tender care and kindness to their children so long as they are small, but are cold toward them when they grow up?

Why is it so hard to bring our relatives together on a joyous or sad occasion, yet they will turn up in a body at the first whiff of thievery or brigandage?

Why are your kinsfolk vexed if your horse comes first in the race?

In the old days people would remember someone who had helped them along the road, be it only once, and recall him with gratitude till the end of their days. But nowadays people soon forget about good deeds. Why is that?

Why is it that a bey's son, on growing impoverished, is not ashamed of stealing, but considers it a disgrace to serve another bey?

Why is it that two good men in the same family are unable to get on with each other, while two rascals always make friends?

Why does someone you consider your friend, to whom you have given a good steed, turn away from you as soon as he gets a foal from your enemy?

Why does someone not value a friend with whom he lives in harmony, but is ready to lay down his life for an enemy who has just once rendered him a service?

Why do many of us not wish our friends well, and should one of two friends has a run of good luck, they become bitter enemies?

Why do people seek a person to give them advice, and shun the counsels of those who know them well?

Why do some guests behave as if they had brought all their herds with them, but when they are your hosts, pretend that their herds have all been driven far away?

People yearn for peace and tranquillity, but should peace come to stay, they grow weary of it. Why on earth?

Why is our people ruled by smart alecs, and why are they poor as a rule?

Why is it that junior wives get shrewish? Why are coundrels bold? Why are some of the poor so conceited?

Why do people who show restraint and live in peace pass for weaklings, while those who are depraved, boastful nd trouble-makers are considered bold and daring?

Why will the Kazakhs not hearken to righteous words nd find no time for that, but are ready to listen to all kinds f gossip, dirt and slander and won't go away until they ear it out to the end, even if all of their affairs go to pot?

Word Forty-One

Anyone who plans on teaching and reforming th Kazakh must possess two advantages.

First of all, he must wield great power and immens influence that would enable him to inspire fear in adul and take away their sons to send them to school, wher they would be guided along different paths of knowledg with the parents shouldering the expenses. It would suffic if girls were taught Islam so as to make at least strong i their religion. In that case, when parents, growing feebl with age, abandoned their regular pursuits, the younge generation would embark on the right path.

Second, he must possess enormous riches, so as t bribe parents into sending their children to school, as w have just said.

Yet no one has sufficient power to inspire fea amongst the people of today. And no one has enoug wealth to win over all parents.

It is impossible to persuade the Kazakh, convince hir of something, unless you frighten or bribe him. The ignc rance inherited from his forefathers and imbibed with hi mother's milk has reached his marrow and killed a

umanity in him. Such people, when they get together, can hink of nothing better to do than make strange grimaces nd behave affectedly, whisper and throw out ambiguous ints. Even if they try to think, they are incapable of con-entrating on one idea. If you talk to them, they can't even isten to you attentively; their eyes glance here and there nd their thoughts wander off.

However shall we live?

What will become of us?

Word Forty-Two

One of the causes of people's inclination to vice is indolence. If the Kazakh had worked the land or engaged in commerce, would he have lived an idle life? But instead he rides from aul to aul on a horse he has begged from someone else, he sponges off other people, spreads gossip and rumours, by guile and duplicity he leads people astray or is himself under the thumb of other scoundrels; he drifts about and does nothing. Anyone who wants to live well and is accustomed to working will consider such life humiliating. Will this person abandon his business and live like a vagabond without any aim or purpose?

He who manages to acquire even a small herd will not be content with his way of life and will not take good care of it; no, he sets off in search of pleasure, leaving his live-stock to the care of his herdsmen and children. His animals will thus become an easy prey for all kinds of thieves and predators, and will die in bad weather. The fellow will get over this loss, but he will be unable to overcome the temp-tation of taking part in secret plots, gossip and petty squab-bles. Out to gain importance in the community, he will engage in all kinds of nasty intrigues and dirty tricks

Others who have attained some affluence also leave their property to the care of strangers—'Now, keep an eye on that!'—and give themselves up to idle chatter, scrounging and roaming around.

Today people do not value high intelligence, a good reputation or wealth; the ability to scribble complaints and the cunning to twist somebody round one's little finger—this is what is respected. He who succeeds in that, poor and destitute though he may be, will be given a place of honour at the table, a fat chunk of meat and a stout horse. Such a scoundrel can easily ingratiate himself with a simple-hearted bey by a bit of blarney—'You just say the word, and I'll go through fire for you!' And this will be enough: without lifting a finger he will be well fed and clothed, ride a fine horse and enjoy general respect.

The bey does not regret his lost peace; he does not count his expenses. Before having a talk with anyone, he seeks advice from this rogue who bows and scrapes for fear of losing the bey's confidence, scared lest other counsellors turn up. 'Allah be with you,' the rogue will say obsequiously, 'how couldn't you think of such a simple thing?' And off he will go, suggesting vile tricks, one worse than the other, and he will implant suspicion of other people in the bey.

At length the bey himself will no longer be trusted by the people. If some clever man disagrees with the bey and turns away from him, the scoundrel will always be there. 'See? Didn't I warn you about them?' And the credulous bey will become putty in his hands.

It is to this the present generation dedicate their minds and will. This is what they live by.

Word Forty-Three

Man is endowed by nature with a body and a soul. One should know which of their properties are innate and which are acquired by toil.

The need for food, drink and sleep is natural, instinctive. The desire to see and learn something comes from a natural instinct, too, but intelligence and learning are gained through work. By hearing with his ears, beholding with his eyes, touching things with his hands, tasting with his tongue and inhaling through his nose, man gets an idea of the surrounding world.

The sensations, pleasant or unpleasant, thus received by the five organs of the senses are ordered in the human mind according to a definite pattern and produce a certain imagery.

To be pleased with the good and to be repelled by the bad are aptitudes natural to man. At first these shoots are very frail. Man must cultivate and amplifies these aptitudes, for without due care and attention, they wither and become useless or die.

A person who looks and listens a good deal, drawing knowledge from the external world gains much: he will be

able to reason lucidly and tell what is useful from what is harmful. A person capable of analysing facts and events is counted among the intelligent.

An ignorant person who cannot think and is unused to work will shift the blame for his idleness to God. 'What can I do if God has not given me brains?' or 'God has not made us equal, you and me!' That's how he will try to justify himself.

But did not God enjoin him to look and listen, and to remember what he sees and hears? Did God say: eat your fill, enjoy yourself, be content with boasting and turn into a beast, having lost all spiritual riches?

Other people will argue: 'Well, a good mind comes with time, but nature endows us with aspiration. He who is endowed with aptitudes acquires good mind as well. Those who lack aptitudes will remain stupid anyway.' Yet this is wrong, too.

Indeed, small children may have aspiration, that's certain. As we have already said, man's aptitudes, at first weak, should be cultivated and improved. Even a craftsman's skill improves from day to day if he works with enthusiasm. Unless you practise your skills, you may lose them and turn into a different person without even noticing it. Will skill and aptitude, forsaking you, warn you of that in advance? Greater effort is needed to regain them than to preserve them.

Now, mental aptitudes are so varied and diverse that they defy description. The vigour of the human soul can preserve the skills of an acquired trade for a long time. Yet

without due care these skills will diminish and in time the very power that helps retain them may run out. It will be impossible to regain this vigour.

The power of the human soul possesses three special properties which must be treasured and cherished, for without them a man becomes an animal.

The first one is called the 'driving element'. What is it? This force helps us not only to comprehend what is seen and heard, but also to vividly perceive cause and effect. Voracious reading is useless without this quality of the mind, for it produces no result. Not having done this or that in good time, not having thought about and said something at the right moment, and being late everywhere, you will fret and be vexed all your life: 'What a pity! I should have done this or that at such and such a moment!'

Another is called the 'attractive force of the like'. Learning something new to you, you start comparing it to similar things. Are they similar in every way or only in some respects? Until you elucidate all the causes of similarity for yourself, enquire about them and verify your suppositions, your mind cannot rest.

And the third property of the human soul, called 'sensibility of the heart'. Should you manage to keep your heart from four vices: conceit, cupidity, frivolity and carelessness, the impressions that you receive of this world will be clearly reflected in the mirror-like chastity of your heart. These impressions will provide nourishment for the mind and will be long remembered. But if you do not preserve the purity of your heart, the mirror of your soul will

grow dim, and everything will be blurred and distorted in it. And your notions of this world will be warped.

Everything that is gained by work and lies outside you is called wealth. Unless you know all the problems and details of managing a household, you will find it hard to keep your goods. But it is equally hard to keep the spiritual wealth that you have gained—intelligence and learning, which, incidentally, may cause considerable harm as well. Not knowing of that and losing your vigilance, you may easily forfeit what has been acquired.

There is a measure to everything on earth, the good things of life included. It is a great blessing to have a sense of measure. The ability to think is praiseworthy, true, but some people know no measure in this: carried away, they get lost in their thoughts and lose their common sense.

One ought to show the right measure in eating, drinking, amusing one's self and getting rich, in seeking power and even in practising caution and vigilance in order not to be tricked. All that is excessive is evil.

The wise men of old used to say: 'In what we seek too persistently we find evil.' You should know that the two qualities of spiritual power which we have defined as 'the attractive force of the like' and 'the driving element' conceal both the good things and the evil things of this world. Lust for power, selfishness, anger and deception, everything that defiles man, springs from the same source. Therefore man's spiritual vigour should be directed towards improving his good and useful points and nipping in the bud whatever is vicious.

Reason distinguishes the beneficial from the harmful; yet even the force of reason cannot vanquish evil. Only he who unites in himself the force of reason with the force of will can succeed in that. A man combining reason and will-power will be like a swift Arab horse, he will have dominion over everything.

But if these qualities are feeble, or one of them is present and the other is not, your spiritual might will carry you like a wild, unruly steed, flinging you now against the rocks, now into the water, now down into the abyss. You are powerless. Off you dash headlong, pell-mell, with the edges of your chapan flying, and your eyes uplifted to the sky... And till the end of your days you will not wipe out this disgrace.

Word Forty-Four

He is the most miserable among men who has no aspiration. Yet there are aspirations of different kinds. Those who aspire to something are not all alike in their abilities and strength of will. Talented or not, all of them like to hear praise and are eager for praise, whether merited or not.

People mix with their own kind and sometimes confide their innermost thoughts to them. More often than not, they expect praise from those who live among, but not from complete strangers.

Some long for honour and respect, others yearn for wealth, no matter how they get it, whether by avarice or cunning. 'He who has gained wealth has no sin.' Or, 'He who is well-off has a beaming face.' This is what they say, knowing that no one is going to censure them for that. They see their honour and merit in wealth. Judging by their perverted ways, this is indeed so. Yet from the standpoint of humanity, this is one of the most obnoxious vices.

Some people are anxious to be lauded as brave men, saints or beys, while others don't mind being called clever tricksters. They will take a pride in notoriety and will try to gain some advantage even from this.

Everybody aspires to something or other, is eager to ead, not books though, but people's faces. They watch ntently, as if trying to feel your pulse, and reckon: 'Well, his must be in favour today, and I could make some prof- on that.'

Before gaining knowledge from books, it is first nec- ssary to cleanse the soul and thoughts of filth and only hen get down to reading.

If you prefer to read people's faces, there is no point in ying to purify your soul, for no one can see what you ave in your soul. It is said: the more folds and notches our soul has, the more solid and invulnerable your pros- erity will be. So, judge for yourself what to learn and what o aspire to.

Word Forty-Five

The proof of the existence of one God, unique and omnipotent, is that for thousands of years people of different tongues have spoken of God, and, however many religions there might be, all consider that love and justice are the attributes of God.

We are not demiurges, but mortals who know this world by the things created. We are the servants of love and justice. And we differ from one another in how well we comprehend the creations of the Most High.

Believing and worshipping, we must not say that we can force others to believe and worship.

The source of humanity is love and justice. They are omnipresent and decide everything. They are the crown of Divine Creation. Even the way a stallion takes possession of a mare is a manifestation of love.

He who is swayed by the feelings of love and justice is a wise man and a learned man. Unable to invent science and learning, we can only behold and perceive the created world and understand its harmony by our reason.

VOCABULARY OF UNFAMILIAR WORDS

aga: an elder
arshin: an old measuring rod equivalent to 28 inches
aul: village, nomadic community
ayat: quoatation from the Qur'an, verse of a surah
batyr: brave warrior, hero
bey (bai): in Central Asia, a wealthy owner of land and livestock
biy: local judge among the Kazakhs
chapan: horseman's cloak or mantle
dombra: stringed musical instrument
dzhigit: expert horseman in the Caucasus and Central Asia
dzhut: mass starvation of cattle in winter resulting in famine
Fatihah al-kitab: the frst surah of the Qur'an
Hadith: account of the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions, second only to the Qur'an
hazret: Muslim priest
iman: faith
khan: lowest rank of clergy
komart: generous man who does charitable deeds
khadi (cadi): Muslim judge

kobyz: stringed musical instrument
koumiss: mare's milk
myrza: nobleman vested with power, philanthropist
Nogai: Kazakh name for Tatars
nokai: dull, stupid
qibla: orientation towards Mecca and the Black Stone of the sacred Kabah building in that city, to which Muslims turn when praying
surah: chapter of the Qur'an
Surt-Sart: rattle, overtalkative person
tarikat: here, a religious doctrine preaching spiritual self-perception through strict abstinence and complete humility
top-basy: tribal elder
uyezd: larger administrative district
volost: small rural district
yel-basy: tribal chief

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ABAI KUNANBAEV (1845-1904)

The Kazakh poet, composer, translator and social activist, was born and buried in Semipalatinsk province, in what is now the independent Republic of Kazakhstan, but was then part of the Russian Empire. The creative work of Abai is a fusion of thought and feeling, an exchange between the mind and the heart, combining personal experience, history, philosophy and religion, morality and psychology. It is the fruit of the difficult and tragic life of this great poet and man, prophet, thinker and enlightener of the people.
In 1995 UNESCO marked the 150th anniversary of the poet throughout the world. The International Academy of Art and Culture held its XVIth